More Fighting KARATE

HIDEYUKI ASHIHARA

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HIDEYUKI
ASHIHARA

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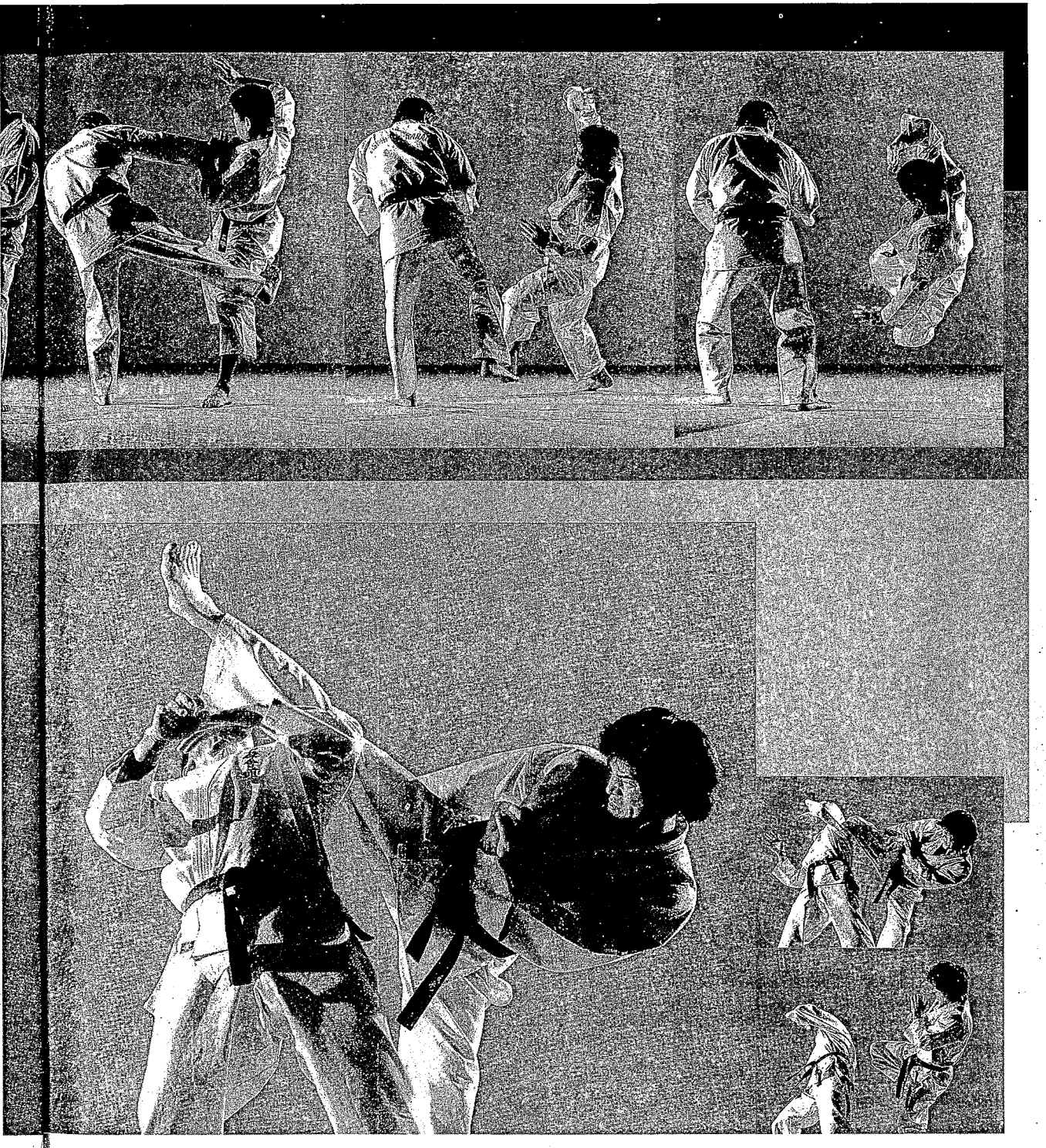
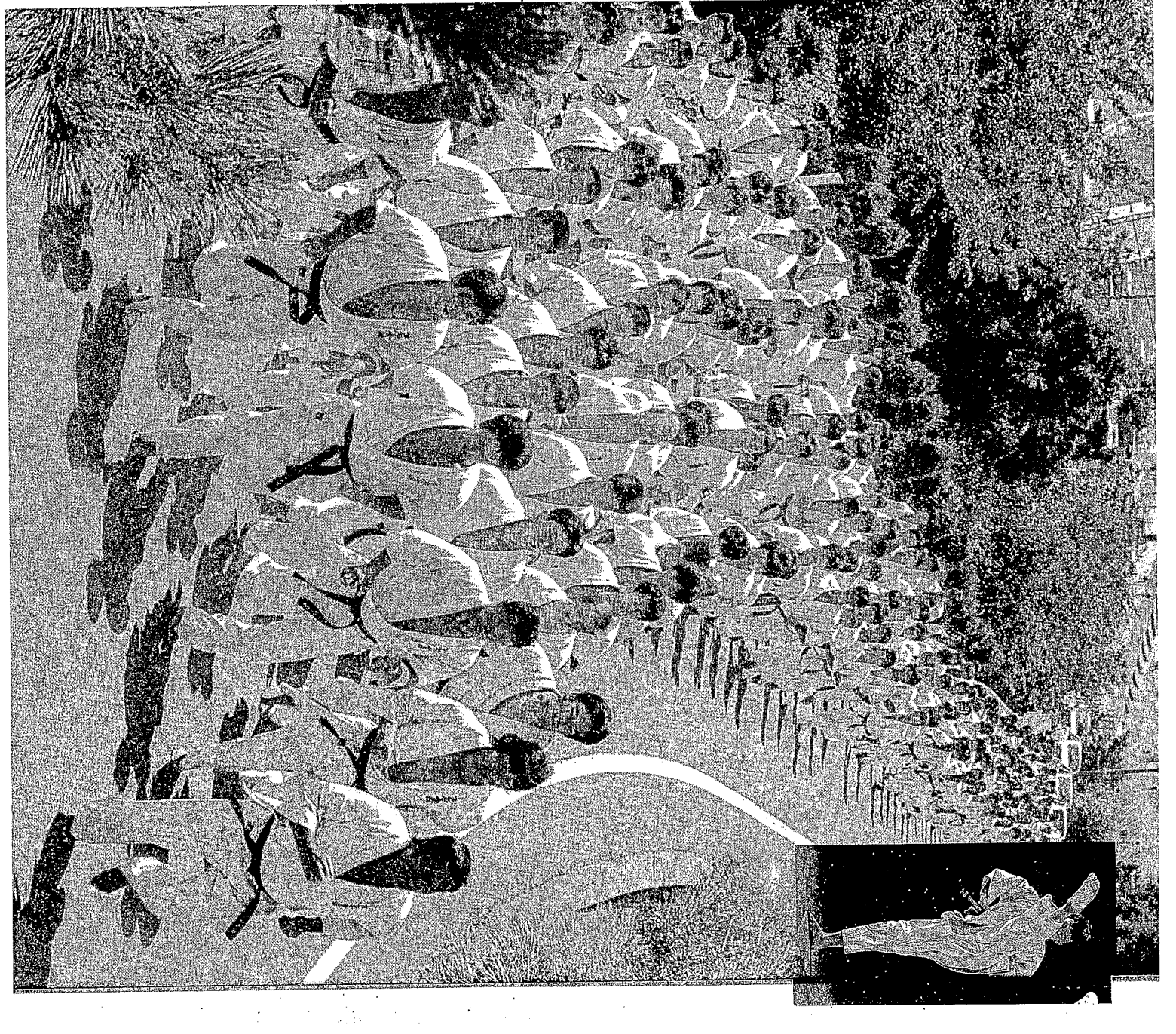
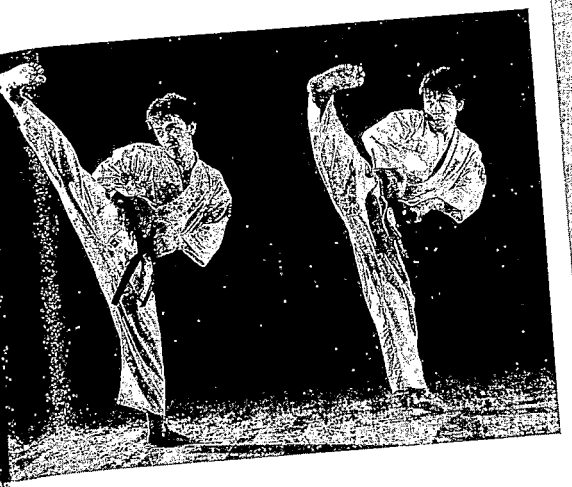
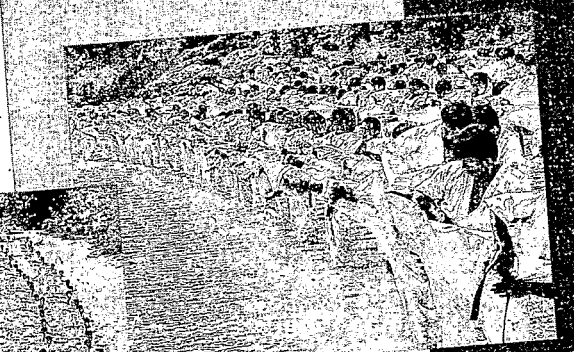
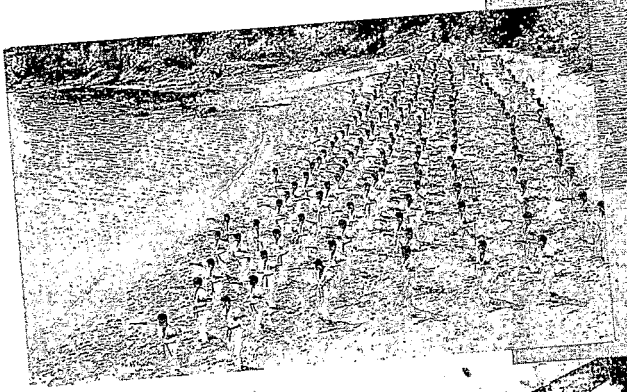
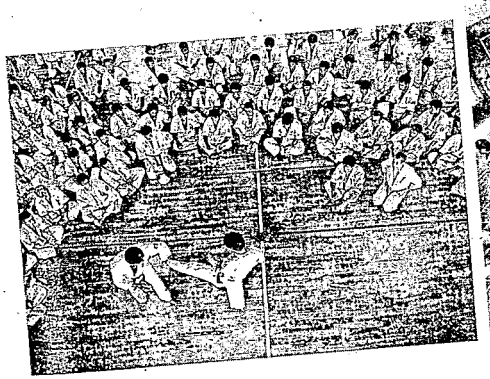


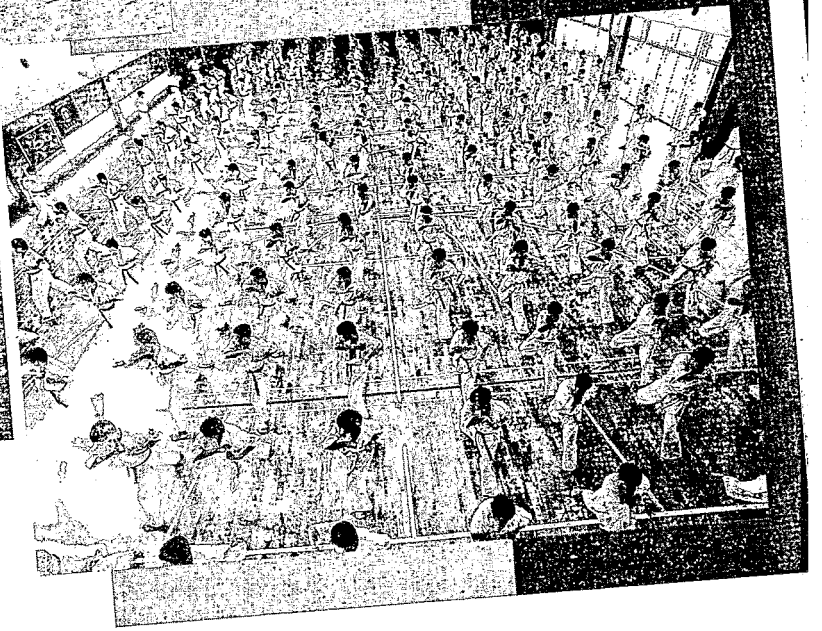












More Fighting KARATE

講談社

INTRODUCTION Why anyone can learn Ashihara Karate

Following the success of *Ashihara Fighting Karate* we are now able to introduce this, the second volume in the series. I believe that this is evidence that the 'scientific, rational' approach to karate of the Ashihara school described in the first volume and the accompanying video, has been understood by a large audience. This gives me great pleasure.

Recently, while watching the movements of students at a grading examination, the thing that impressed me most was the startling progress made by students who had been training on their own, without instructors. These enthusiasts train using only books and videos as their guide. They came for their first grading unembarrassed and determined to show the skills they had learnt. Whenever I see such results, I feel greatly encouraged. At the same time I realize my responsibility to provide them, as well as those thinking of beginning karate, with a superior text.

This book is intended to introduce material not covered in the first volume, from the practice of basic techniques, to the method of application, and their use in a real fight.

In any sport, not only karate, those who are blessed with great talent can reach the highest levels through personal effort, without receiving any special tuition. Most people, however, are not so lucky. If you employ a chaotic teaching method and one student in the class nevertheless manages to become skilled and powerful, that would not be due to the teaching, but simply because he has exceptional talent: such people improve without being taught.

I am not aiming for a style of karate that results in a mass of failures while producing one superman—more a style where the enthusiast can continue training for a lifetime, improving gradually without dropping out on the way. Ashihara karate is not a style that only someone like me can master. My efforts are consantly directed at producing a karate that *anyone* can do.

In developing my style, I first considered the various functions of the human body, and from there tried to understand how you could maximize the body's performance in order to fell the opponent without being felled yourself. If this principle can be understood and mastered, then karate becomes something which anyone can learn.

Take a look at the photographs on the right, they show how you can prevent your opponent from counterattacking. The human body is designed in such a way that the head on, frontal attack is the most viable. Conversely, it is difficult to attack to the rear. That is to say, when your opponent attacks you, if you can get behind him, your position will become safe and the initiative will lie with you.

For the human body there are directions in which it is easy to move and those in which it is difficult. For instance, when your opponent approaches head on, it needs a great deal of power to push him back. If instead you slip to his side and pull him onwards, he will carry on under his own steam. At that point if you apply just a little force from the outside, you will change the direction of momentum and the opponent will spin, his balance upset. If pushing doesn't work, pull. If pulling doesn't work, spin him around; if that doesn't work, step round and into him. Use your opponent's own momentum to build up power. In this way even a weak person can fell an opponent.

I hope that this book will be of assistance in resolving doubts that anyone—from beginner to lapsed black belts—may have about karate.

The answer to such doubts lie within reach.

Ashihara Karate: Word List

The four motions: refers to the step work that symbolizes the basic circular movements of Ashihara karate. They are represented in the badge of the Ashihara school.

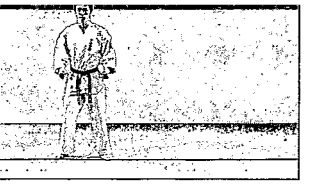
Fight controls: a term that symbolizes all that Ashihara Karate stands for; it implies a revolutionary, scientific, logical and safe type of sports karate; specifically, it refers to the ability to take up a safe and strong position from which to contain your opponent and launch a counterattack.

Positioning: refers to the ability to take up a position at the opponent's side or back from which you can easily attack without being attacked yourself.

Ashihara karate kata: kata specially devised so that students can master the logical art of parrying even on their own; they have been formulated to suit students of all levels from beginner to black belt, and include beginners' kata, basic kata, the throwing kata, sparring kata, fighting kata, self-defence kata as well as weapons kata and 'circle' kata. They represent both a compilation of fight controls, as well as a model for combinations.

Impact: refers to the moment the strike makes contact with the opponent; it is used for attacking movements and blocks: all power is concentrated in that moment.

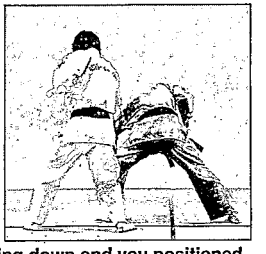
Follow-through: refers to the movement from the



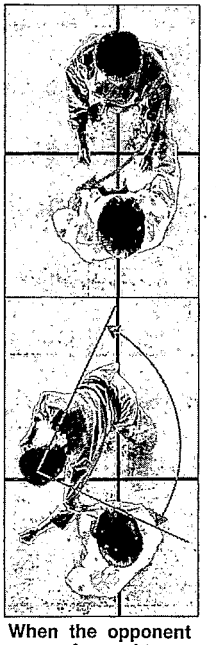
Pull the opponent inside and spin him down.

Pull your opponent in and diagonally down by his elbow. Pull him in.

A safe and effective parry involves first establishing a position from which you are not open to attack. As these photos show, if you pull the opponent in and diagonally downwards, you can get outside and behind him. The ability to do this in a real fight is the essence of parrying. Footwork, positioning, blocks, felling your opponent—in short, all the movements are calculated to turn your opponent.



With the opponent's face pointing down and you positioned behind him, even if he wanted to there is no chance of him being able to attack you. However, you can attack him freely with punches and kicks. Parrying involves being able to strike your opponent from outside his range while at the same time ensuring that he stays within your own effective range.

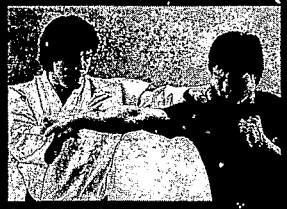


When the opponent moves forward to attack, use his strength to pull him in and around. Use the other hand and he will turn in the opposite direction.

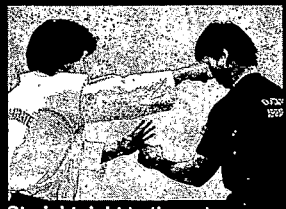
time of impact to the end of the technique; damage is inflicted with "impact" and the follow-through sends the opponent flying. After following-through the hand or foot is quickly retracted.
The head: refers to the knuckles of the first and the striking part of the foot; also used of elbows and knees. At the moment of impact, all weight is placed on the head.
In step: a step forward.
Side step: stepping to either the right or left.
Inside step: 'in step' (see above) refers not only to stepping in straight, but also at an angle to the inside; the term 'inside-step' is used to emphasize this aspect.

Infighting: refers to fighting with an opponent from middle or close distance.
Sticking: refers to the closest possible position with your opponent, when your hand can touch your opponent with you elbow by your side. Throws are carried out from the sticking position; if you push your opponent away you can apply any kind of attack.
Outside: the area behind the body from which techniques cannot be launched. With your left foot placed forward it will be to your left side and with your right foot placed forward it will be to your right side. 'Positioning' means moving to your opponent's outside.

TECHNIQUES AND TARGETS


Straight left to the jaw.

Straight right to the bridge of the nose.


Straight right to the outer corner of the eye.

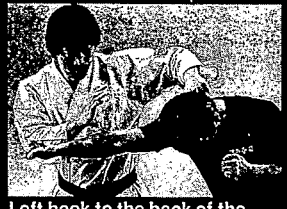
Straight right to the chin.

Straight right to the jaw.

Right hook to the jaw.

Right cross hook to the chin.

Right uppercut to the chin.


Left hook to the back of the head.

Right hook to the ribs.

Left hook to the cervical vertibrae.

Left elbow strike to the back of the head.

Right elbow strike to the bridge of the nose.

Back fist to the bridge of the nose.

Back fist to the back of the head.

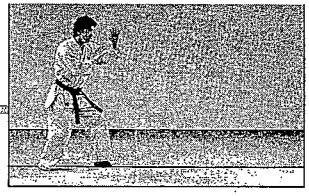
Back fist to the chin.

Handsword to the back of the head.

Handsword to the face.

Left knee strike to the solar plexus.

Left knee strike to the face.



- **In a real fight, attack with combinations.**
- **Divide into high, middle and low target areas.**
- **Use techniques suitable for the distance involved.**

Right knee strike to the back of the head.

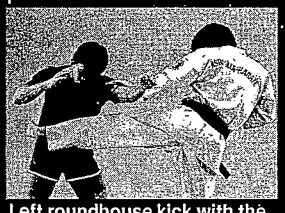
Right knee strike to the thigh.

Left front kick to the solar plexus.

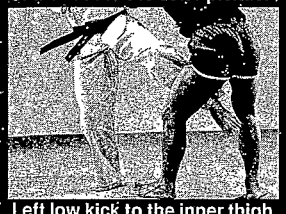
Right middle roundhouse with the ball of the foot to the side.

Left roundhouse with the ball of the foot to the solar plexus.

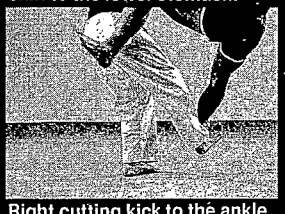
Right roundhouse kick with the shin to the side.

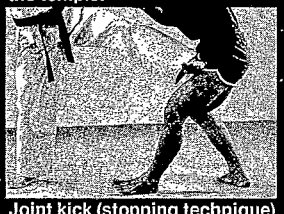

Left roundhouse kick with the shin to the lower stomach.

Right upper roundhouse kick to the temple.

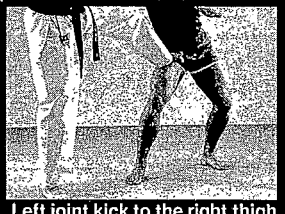

Left low kick to the inner thigh (inner thigh kick).

Right low kick to the back of the knee.

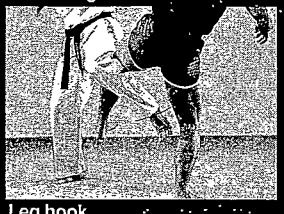

Right cutting kick to the ankle.


Joint kick (stopping technique) to the thigh.

Left joint kick to above the knee.

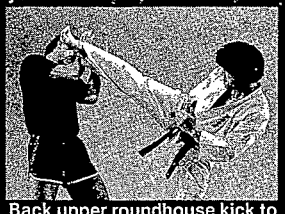

Left joint kick to the right thigh joint.

Left joint kick to the left thigh joint.


Leg hook.

Low back kick to the inner thigh.

Back roundhouse kick to the body.


Back upper roundhouse kick to the face.

Back roundhouse kick to the back of the head.

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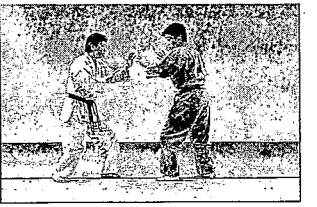

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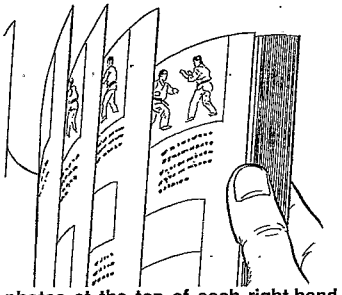
How to use this book

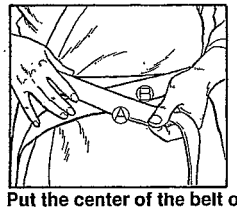
The contents are arranged as follows: first the basic practice for each technique, next training methods for each technique in real fights, and finally parrying involving each of the techniques.
Training in basics is marked in bold in the contents. Read this book in the order it is written, and the Ashihara training method and figh control technique will become second nature to your body. However, another way of using the book is to first concentrate on only those pages marked in bold and so master the basics before going on to look at each technique in more detail. The book is written so that it can be used in a number of ways by beginner to black belt.

Photos at the top of the right-hand page

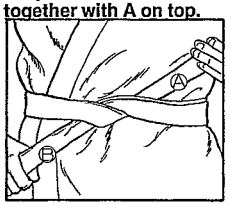


The photos at the top of each right-hand page illustrate the sparring version of the second Ashihara karate throwing kata. If you flick through the pages, you can get an idea of the actual movements. There is a detailed explanation on p.164.

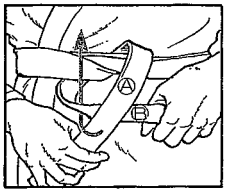
• Tying the Belt



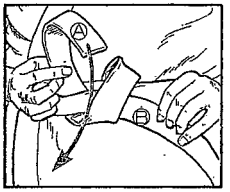
Put the center of the belt over your navel, wrap it around and bring the ends together with A on top.



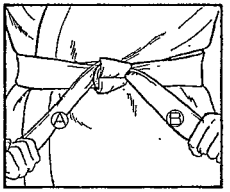
Pass A up between belt and uniform and tighten.



Bring A down, and feed it up beneath B.



Point A and B downwards and tie so the knot is horizontal.



In the Ashihara school, the words 'Ashihara Kaikan' are written on A, and the student's name is written on B.

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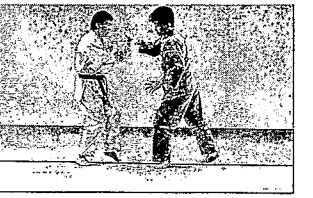

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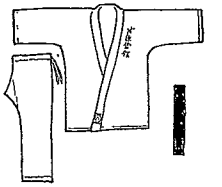
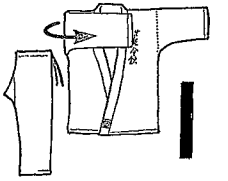
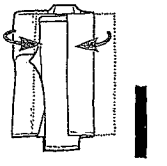


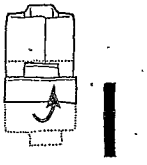
Align the hem of the jacket as in the picture, and straighten out. The pants are folded neatly along the vertical.



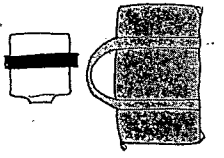
The sleeves of the jacket are folded inside. Do the same on both sides and straighten.



Place the pants in the center of the jacket, and fold the shoulders, left and right, so that they are in line with the waist.



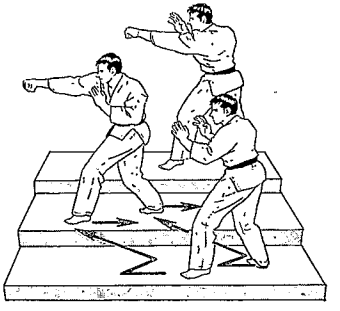
Fold up the hem of the jacket with the pants, and fold over along the dotted line.



Ashihara school students are required to carry their uniforms in a special bag.

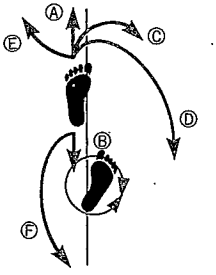
FOOTWORK

The essence of footwork is to avoid your opponent's attack by stepping back, then to step in and counterattack. If you just keep stepping back, you will be felled. Always bear in mind that the step back is a prelude to attack: straight back, then straight forward. Once you can do this smoothly, learn to move diagonally backwards, move sideways and move backwards in a circle until it's second nature. You must also be able to use the in-step in a straight line or circular motion in every direction from the step-back position. Furthermore, you have to be able to punch and kick with every step you take. One way of training to develop this ability is to use a stairway. Punch as you step forward, as you move down a step, and as you move up a step. Train in such a way that the energy and spring used in stepping up and down the steps improves the power of your punches and kicks. Practice this in the southpaw stance as well.



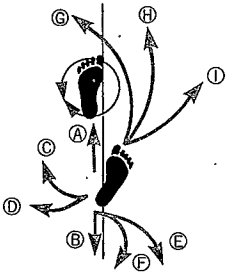
Footwork training using stairs

Single step



Front foot

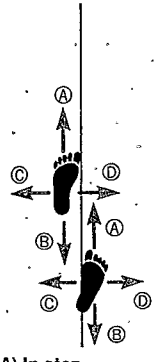
A) Instep
B) Outstep (step back)
C) Short cross step
D) Long cross step
E) Inside step
F) Outstep



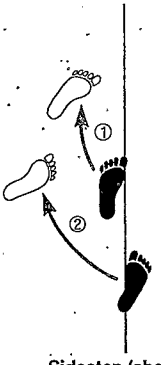
Back foot

A) Instep
B) Outstep
C) Left instep
D) Left outstep
E) Right outstep
F) Side on outstep
G) Back foot cross step
H) Back foot advance (instep)
I) Back foot right instep

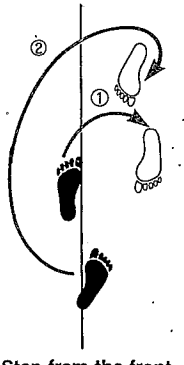
Simultaneous footwork



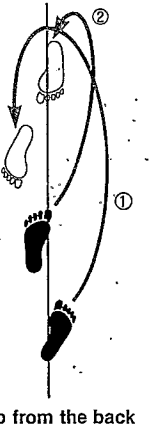
A) In step
B) Out step
C) Left sidestep
D) Right sidestep. Remember each of these has a diagonal form.



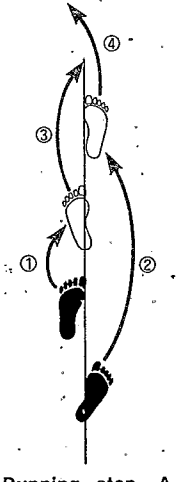
Sidestep (absorbing step) Sidestep diagonally to the front. Train from both sides.



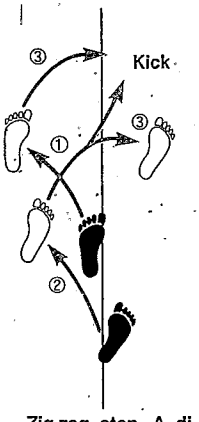
Step from the front to get behind the opponent. Move across the center line of your body to get behind him.



Step from the back foot to get behind your opponent. Cross step with the back foot to get behind your opponent to the left.

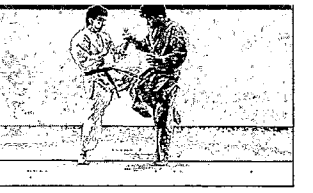


Running step. A front foot step like a walk. All steps can easily become kicks.



Zig-zag step. A diagonal forward step in zig-zag form. Step ③ can become a kick.

THE FOUR MOTIONS



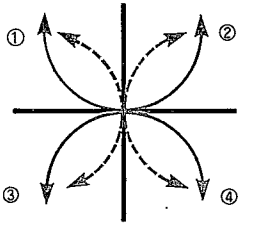
If you master the basic footwork you will be able to use it effectively in a real fight. Ashihara karate concentrates particularly on attacking, blocking, and parrying while on the move. For example, in the use of a low parry—if you carry it out from a stationary position your movements are limited, but if you step at the same time the scope of movement increases in that instant, so making it easier to fell the opponent. The key is to master the correct use of punches, kicks, and blocks which, combined with correct footwork, enable Ashihara karate to effectively fell the opponent with a few combinations. The diagrams show the four fundamental footwork motions based upon circular movement which are the essence of Ashihara karate.

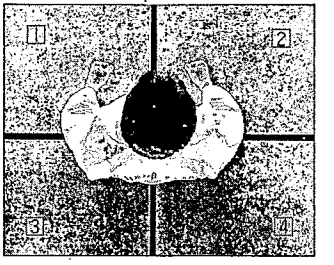
The four motions

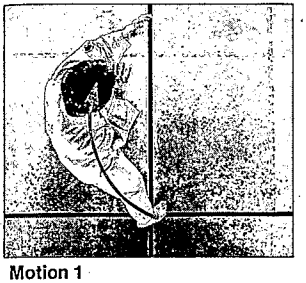
1. left foot forward step
2. right foot forward step
3. left foot back step
4. right foot step back

The dotted lines represent each of the cross steps: the step taken in each case by the opposite foot across the centerline of the body. They represent at the same time the path the foot takes when the step along any of the motions is long. So, for example, if you take an exaggerated step along motion 1, your foot will in effect pass along the dotted line of motion 2. The same applies to the backward step taken in motions 3 and 4. Again, if you step out along motion 2 and 3, you will finish in a southpaw stance. Control techniques are carried out through combinations of these motions.

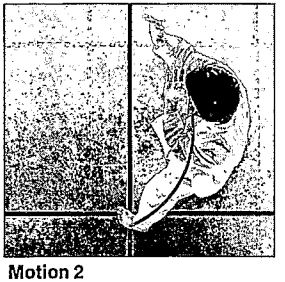
∘ The four motions



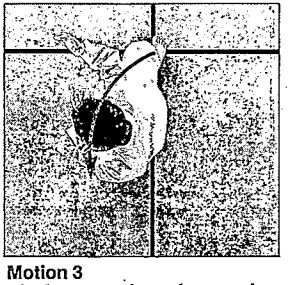




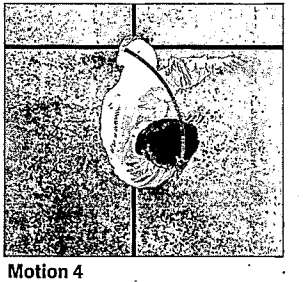
Motion 1
...is the step taken when moving the left leg forward and to the left from a natural stance.



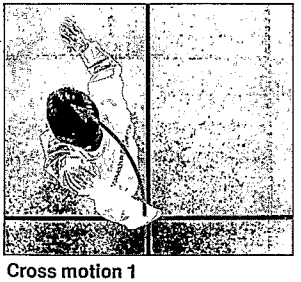
Motion 2
...is the step taken when moving the right leg forward and to the right from a natural stance.



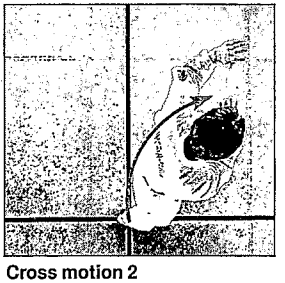
Motion 3
...is the step taken when moving the left leg behind and to the left.



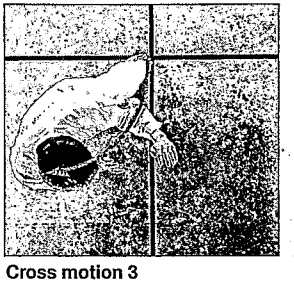
Motion 4
...is the step taken when moving the right leg behind and to the right.



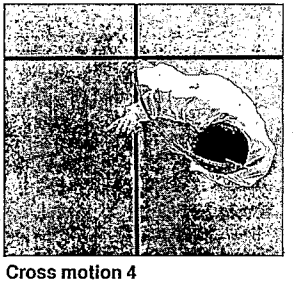
Cross motion 1
...is where the right foot moves forward and to the left: an extension of motion 2.



Cross motion 2
...is where the left foot moves forward and to the right: an extension of motion 1.

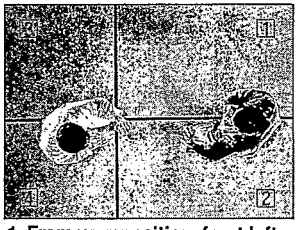


Cross motion 3
...is where the right foot moves behind and to the left: an extension of motion 4.



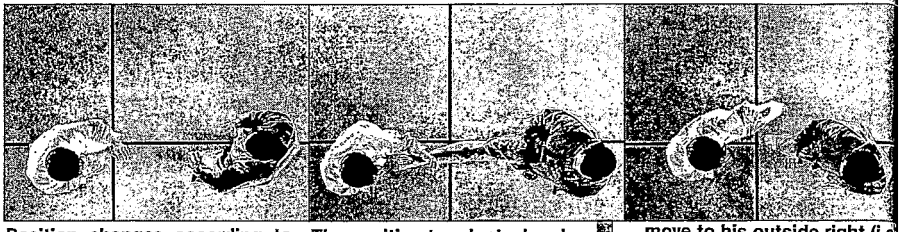
Cross motion 4
...is where the left foot moves behind and to the right: an extension of motion 3.

POSITIONING The four positions



1. From your position, front left is [1], front right [2], left rear [3], right rear [4]. (Positions reversed from the opponent's view.)

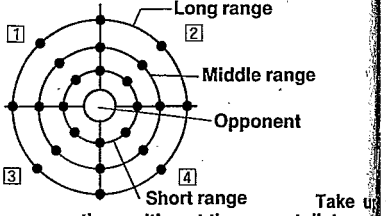
Position 1



Position changes according to the direction of the opponent's attack.

The position to adopt when he comes forward with a right front-kick...

...move to his outside right (i.e his rear) with your left foot (motion 1).

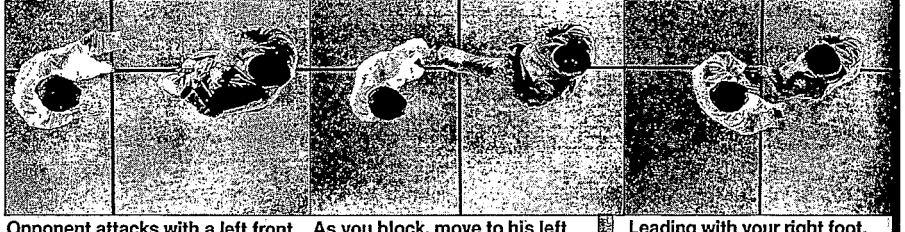


Take up the position at the correct distance and at the correct point on the circle for the opponent's movement to avoid attack and launch your counters.

Positioning is the technique of using footwork to move yourself into a suitable position to attack an opponent's weak points; his back or his side. Only positioning makes possible the Ashihara karate adage of 'hitting without being hit and felling without being felled'. Positioning means placing oneself at any point on an imaginary 360° circle drawn around the opponent at any of the three distances—close, middle or long. It is easiest to explain in terms of the four motions already mentioned (from the orthodox stance). Imagine your opponent attacks with a right front kick down the center line. The safest, and best position from which to launch your attack is to your opponent's rear right side, position 1 in the diagram above left. (If your opponent attacks with a left front kick, move to his left).

In order to get into this position, deflect his right front kick and, while stepping forward in a straight line with the left foot (motion 1), pull the right foot (motion 2) around in a wide circle. This will bring you into position 1. A combination of motions 2 and 3 will bring you into position 2. Motion 4 will bring you to position 3, while motion 3 will bring you to position [4]. By using the various steps, angles and changes in step length, you can move easily in response to your opponent's own movements. Attack while positioning yourself. You have to position yourself as your opponent's attack misses you and before his recovery. For instance, in the case of a punch, position before he has time to pull back his fist for a second strike; in the case of a kick, within the time between the impact of his kick and his foot reaching the ground. Make speed and economy of movement instinctive.

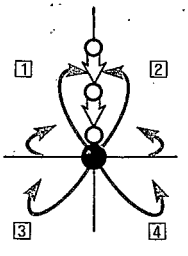
Position 2



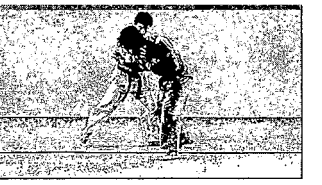
Opponent attacks with a left front kick.

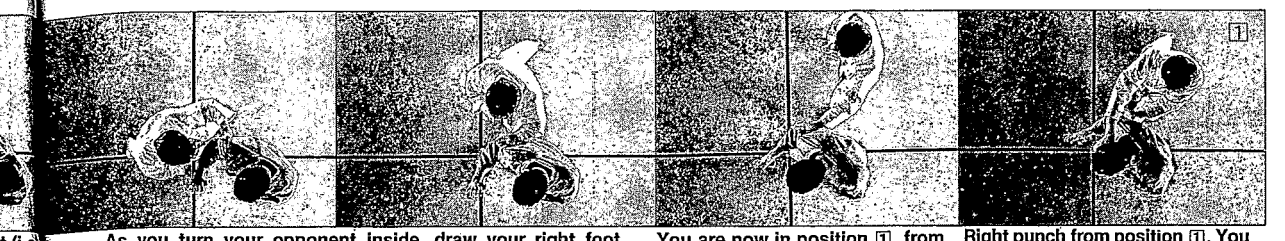
As you block, move to his left side (outside).

Leading with your right foot, in motion 2 move behind him.



Positioning is adjusted to accommodate your opponent's advance. If he comes close, positions [3] and [4] are suitable; if he does not advance much then take positions 1 and 2 to the side and back.



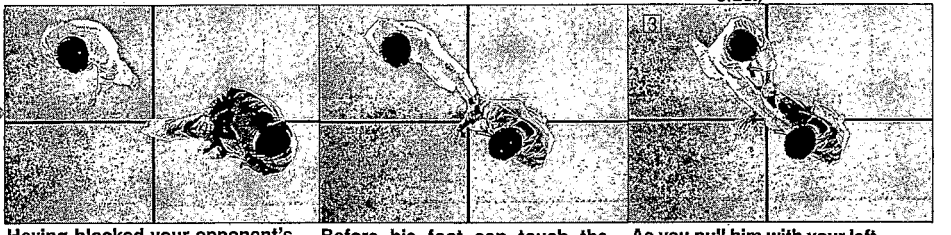


As you turn your opponent inside, draw your right foot around behind you in a wide circle (motion 4), moving towards position 1.

You are now in position 1, from which you can easily attack without being hit.

Right punch from position 1. You can also kick or throw. (If your opponent pulls back his kicking leg very quickly, go in on the other side.)

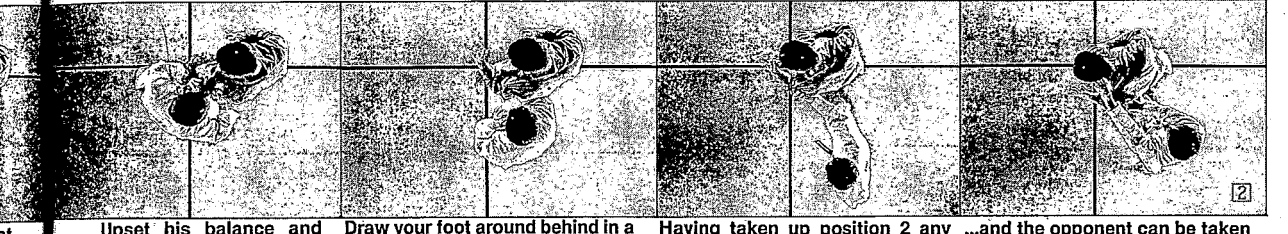
Position 3



Having blocked your opponent's right front kick, move wide in motion 4 with your right foot to bring yourself to position 3.

Before his foot can touch the ground again, attack from his right side.

As you pull him with your left hand, punch him with your right.



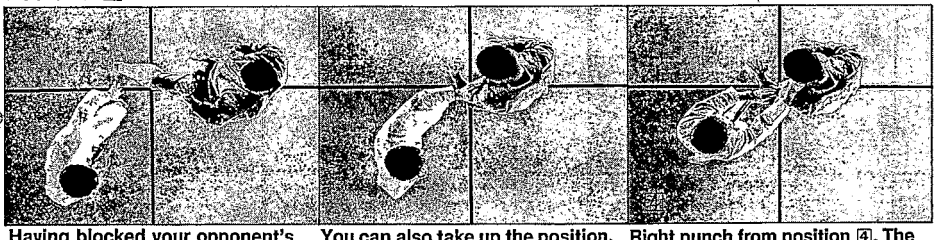
Upset his balance and prevent attack by pulling him in and bumping him.

Draw your foot around behind in a wide circle (motion 3), to move into position 2.

Having taken up position 2 any possible counterattack is effectively contained...

...and the opponent can be taken in any way you want.

Position 4

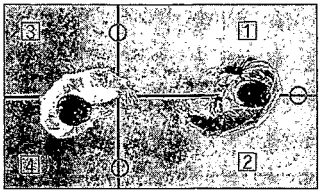


Having blocked your opponent's left front kick, take up position 4 by moving your right foot (motion 2, and pulling in your left.

You can also take up the position by taking a large step back with your left foot (motion 3).

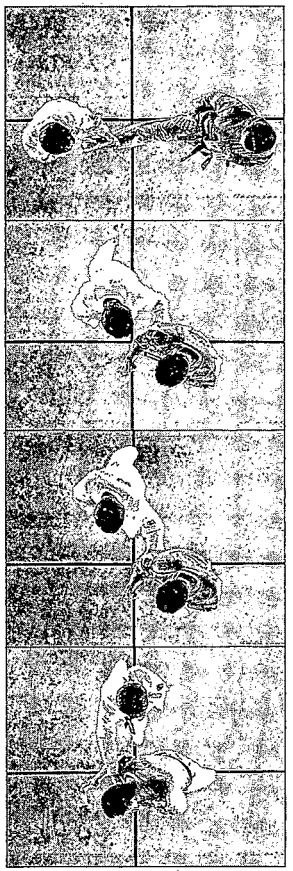
Right punch from position 4. The closer he is to you, the surer your strike.

POSITIONING SIDE AND BACK POSITION



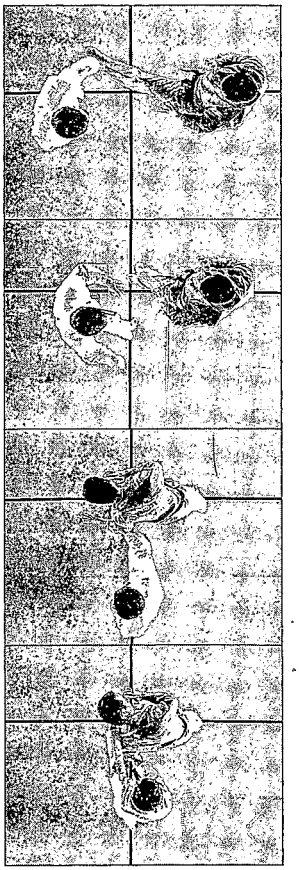
It is now clear that 'positioning' is the taking up of positions on a circle around your opponent. Of all these positions, those at his side and his back are the safest, where it is difficult for him to attack you. The method of approach differs according to whether you take his left or his right. In these positions be particularly careful of your opponent's rear elbow strike, back fist or handsword.

Side position 1



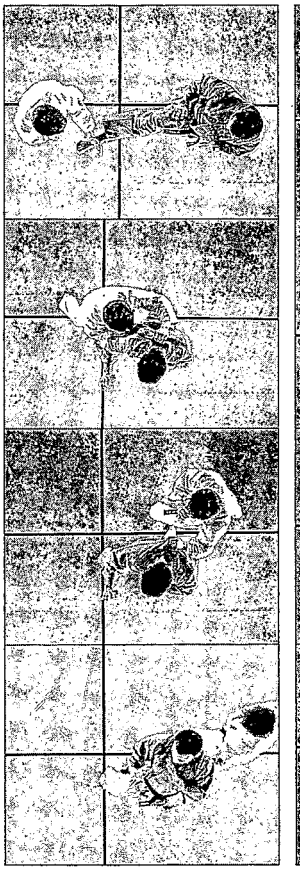
When the opponent attacks with a right punch or a right kick, take a position to the right and behind him (outside right) by moving your left foot wide in motion 1 and your right foot wide in motion 4, then attack.

Side position 2

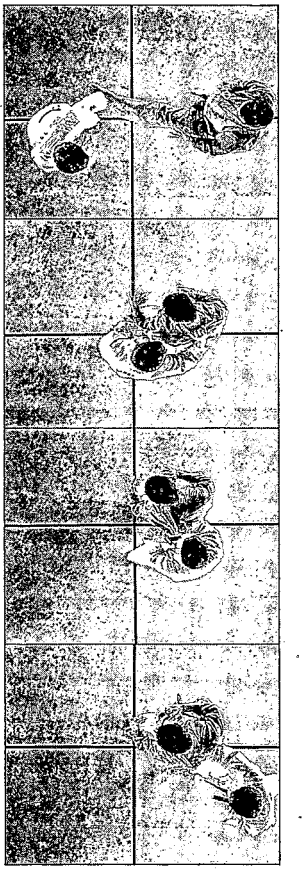


Similarly, if the opponent attacks with a left punch or a left kick, move your right foot wide in motion 2 and your left foot wide in motion 3 to get to the left and behind your opponent (outside left), then attack.

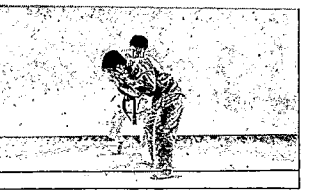
Back position 1



Back position 2

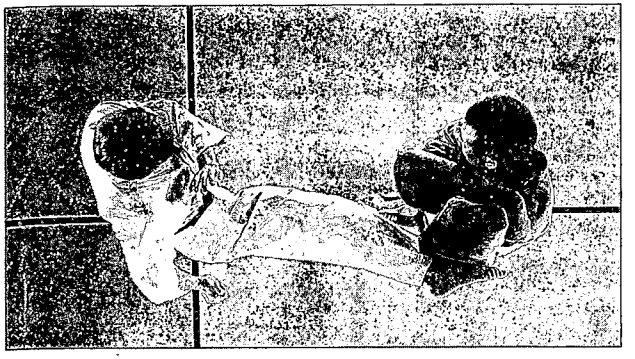


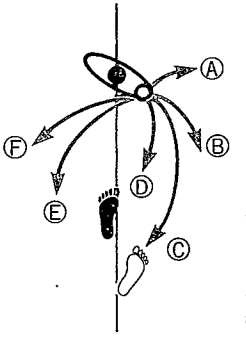
Depending on whether your opponent's attack comes from left or right, you take the left back position or right back position respectively. By pulling the foot around in a wider circle than for the side position, you finish in the back position. This is also the position to take when an opponent charges you at full speed. Your response will also depend on whether your opponent steps in with his front foot first or his back foot.



Placing of the foot after kicking

In combinations and parries, don't attack your opponent from the front: position yourself on his outside, then attack. (To attack his front you first need to break his stance with your arms and legs.) To this end, positioning can be achieved by footwork of course, but it is also important to use your kicking leg as it lands after the first kick. Remember that kicks are themselves steps, otherwise practice will just turn into a succession of kicks.





This diagram shows the possible positions where you can bring your foot down following the kick shown in the photo. The position taken will depend on how your opponent's position is affected by your kick, where the kick hit home, and other factors. Maintain control with these points in mind—this is particularly important for stopping and knee blocks.

The photograph shows a right roundhouse kick at the moment of impact. Following this kick, here are some combinations which illustrate to which position you should return the kicking leg and which kick you should move into next depending on your opponent's state of balance, his stance and the distance between you.

(A) Bring your kicking foot down outside and behind your opponent (in response to a forward movement) and counter with a left knee kick, an inner thigh kick or a cutting kick. Take a big step back in motion 3 to leave you in position 2, from which you can follow up with any type of kick.

(B) Bring your foot down on his outside, and follow up with a right knee kick, left knee kick, left joint kick and right roundhouse kick. Pull the left foot around short in motion 3 into position 4, execute various kicks.

(C) Pull the kicking foot back wide and return to original stance. Use a right double roundhouse kick, a rear kick counter etc. Depending on your opponent's stance and the distance between you, go into left and right front kicks, roundhouse kicks, joint kicks, and knee kicks.

(D) Bring your foot down short into the southpaw stance, and launch a fight front kick, side kick, stopping kick, joint kick, hook kick, right roundhouse kick, knee kick... right or left kicks can be launched.

(E) Kick through your opponent and follow through to the front with a right hook kick, heel kick, side kick etc, or a left back roundhouse kick, or back kick.

(F) Kick through your opponent, bringing your foot down behind him (when your opponent has moved wide to the side in response to your kick) use a left back roundhouse kick, step in off your rear left foot to hook kick or heel kick.

- **Use footwork to return to your stance quickly and you can launch all types of kick.**
- **Mix in punches to break your opponent's stance so you can perform any kick.**
- **Watch your opponent's stance carefully and don't miss a chance to stick to him and throw him.**

DISTANCE AND JUDGEMENT

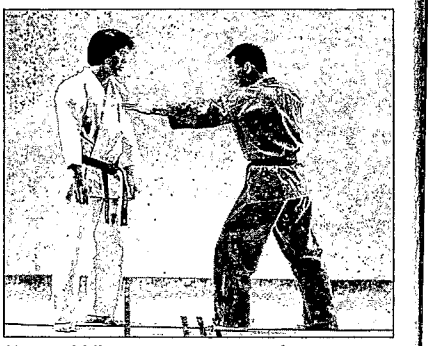
THREE RANGES

In Ashihara karate, you tackle your opponent from three ranges (the distance between the opponent and yourself): middle range, short range or long range. We seek to apply the various techniques depending on this distance.

Taking a middle roundhouse kick as a yardstick in judging distance, one way of defining the ranges would be as follows: a middle roundhouse kick would hit the target with full impact from middle range, a 5cm step forward from middle range would bring you to close range, a 5cm step back would bring you to long range. Alternatively, the distance from which you can touch your opponent with outstretched fingers is middle range, while from short range you can touch him with your fist. Needless to say, the actual distance between you also depends upon such physical characteristics as arm-and leg-length, and will constantly change as you move around while fighting. There are recognizable distances lying between short, middle and long, but for purposes of explanation we have generalized under these three headings.

Middle range

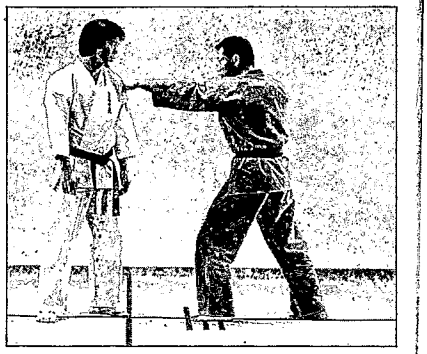
As we have noted, this is the distance from which a middle roundhouse kick will strike its target with maximum effect. That is to say, at this distance you will feel the full impact of your opponent's explosive kick. Of course, this works both ways: to deliver a effective kick you have to close in to this range. Therefore, in a real fight you have to be ready to both move into middle range and out of it.



From middle range you can touch your opponent with outstretched fingers. The area you can reach with your hand is the target area.

Short range

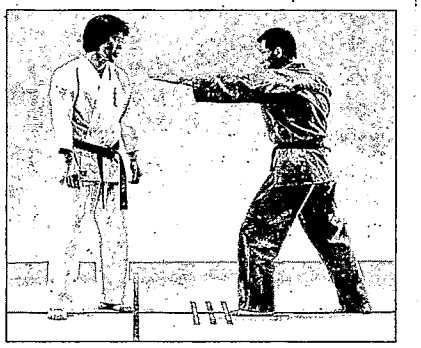
This is 5cm forward of middle range, though this can vary from 3 -10cm, depending on the grade of the individual. This and anything closer is the range for infighting. From this position it is all too easy to step back into middle distance which, as we have seen, can be dangerous. Avoid doing this and step in, (to his side) positively, using knee strikes, elbow strikes and short, sharp jabs to fell the opponent.



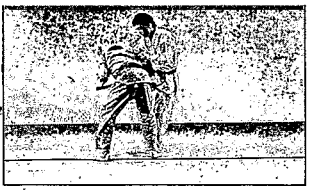
Short range and closer is punching range. Go in and use infighting techniques.

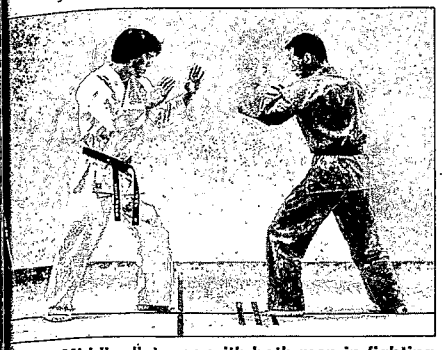
Long range

This is 5cm back from middle range. Beginners should remember that having stepped back from middle range to block your opponent's attacks, you should step back into middle range in order to counterattack. If you just retreat, you'll be knocked down. You have to be back on the attack within the time your opponent has launched the first two moves of his combinations, if you don't, by the time he gets to his third move, you'll have been pushed too far back to counter, and will have lost.

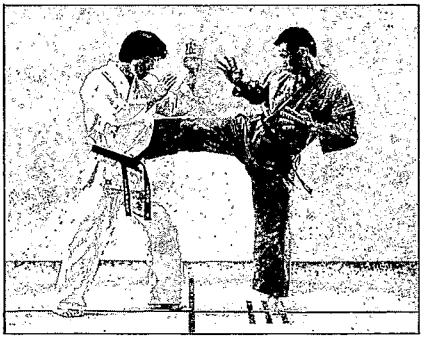


From long range you can't reach your opponent. It's the safest position for you, but also for him.



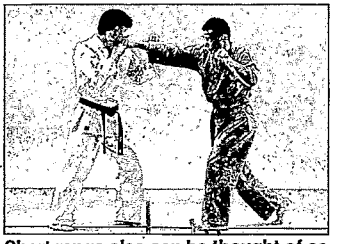


Middle distance with both men in fighting stance. Stances differ according to the grade of each man.



Distance for optimum impact of middle roundhouse kick. Impact is adjusted by the turn of the pivot leg, waist and hip joint.

• Punch—middle range



Short range also can be thought of as middle range for a straight punch. At this range, you will need to keep your guard up and utilize a succession of techniques to stop yourself being hit.

Short range with both men in fighting stance. From short range you can do a lot of damage. Be sure to turn your shoulders and hips for maximum effect.

At short range a middle roundhouse kick can be stopped before it has time to get going. This is also the range for low kicks.

• Punch—short range

From short range (i.e. 5cm further in than regular short) an opponent can launch any punch, and you have to watch for elbow strikes with body weight behind them. Cutting kicks and leg sweeps can also be used a lot at this distance.

When you reach an advanced level, you'll be able to hit your opponent with long kicks even from this distance through the use of your pivot leg and hips.

The distance from which an ordinary roundhouse kick will not strike. Beginners should use blocks and stepping back to defend from this distance.

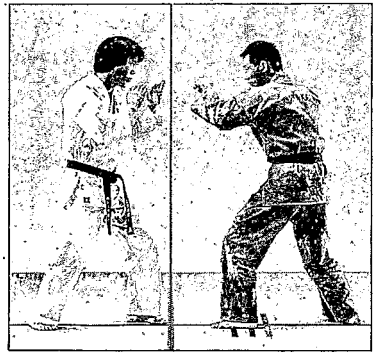
• Punch—long range

From this range (i.e. regular middle) you must be on the lookout for kicks and punches launched from a step in. Be careful of punches which can make the distance through instep, swinging of the shoulders or leaning forward. Watch out for long punches with extra distance provided by the forward motion of the body by leaning in or by turning the shoulders.

JUDGEMENT

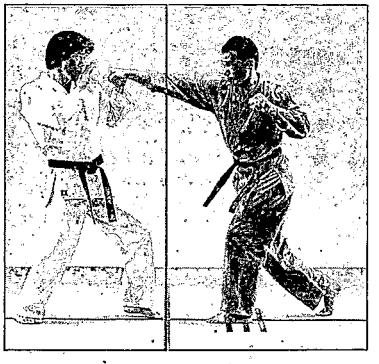
Judgement is the ability to make split-second decisions during a fight. It falls into three categories: range, technique and timing.

• Judging range



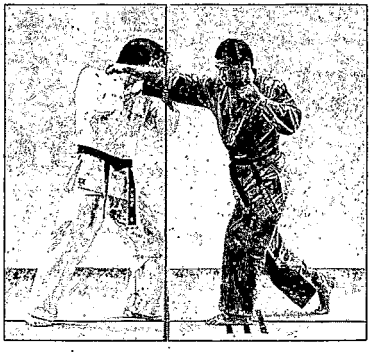
Infighting range. Look out for all types of punches and low kicks. For beginners, your first response to the opponent's attacks should be to step back. For those at a higher level, it is important to master bobbing and weaving to adjust distance.

• Defense by weaving



Without moving your feet, you can change the distance between you and your opponent by weaving your upper body, switching quickly to a counterattack. If your center of gravity is too high or too far back, you will be unable to counterattack. You must keep your front knee at the same angle and don't lose the spring in your knees.

• Stepping in to defend



As you become more proficient still, you will be able to twist sideways to your opponent, moving to his outside and then attack with a counter. You will be able to fight more efficiently, combining blocks, and in step positioning.

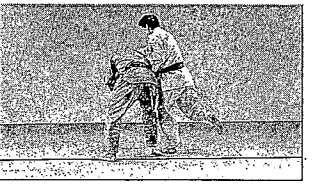
Judging range

You must be able to judge how to move from the basic fighting range (i.e. middle range) at which both your techniques, and those of your opponent are most effective. For the most efficient attack, this is the distance you most need to be in. By the same token, however, it is the worst position to be taking an opponent's attacks. In response to your opponent's techniques you may step forward into short range, stopping his techniques before they have time to get going, or alternatively, step back and parry his follow through aside. (As you gain a higher level of proficiency, you won't be restricted solely to stepwork, but will be able to weave and turn, and so adjust range by moving the upper body.)

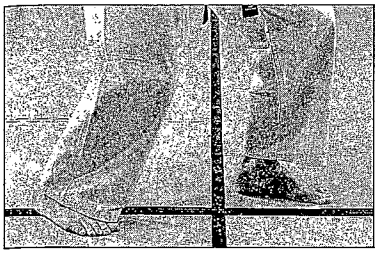
Judging technique

Judgement in this case is the ability to quess what technique your opponent is going to come at you with next. Learn to read this from his stepwork, shifts of body weight, the movement of his eyes and suchlike. For example, if his weight is on his front leg he won't be able to kick with that leg. If his weight is on his rear leg he won't be able to kick with it, in addition to which any kick with the front leg will lack power. Those who use a wide stance are unable to kick effectively without first narrowing the distance between their feet by either bringing the back foot forward, or the front foot back. The number of techniques which they can use is also limited. You can more or less guess what an opponent is going to do at the start of his technique, from the angle of his hips and the angle at which his knee begins to move. It is also vital to judge the speed of his technique.

In order to develop the ability to read your opponent's moves, you must first concentrate on what your own body does when you attempt various techniques, then imagine how this must appear to your opponent and practice accordingly. Think about your movements as you train.

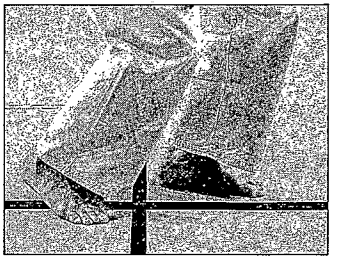


• Stance from which you can kick with both feet



If you put too much weight on your front foot, as in the standard fighting stance, it's difficult to kick with it. When kicking with the front foot, a shift of weight to the back foot, or a movement of the back leg is essential. Attack at the moment of that movement.

• Stance just before attack



In this stance the front foot is drawn back half a step (half stance). From here you can launch stopping kicks, joint kicks and a variety of fast kicks. Aim to kick at the moment your stance narrows.

Judging timing

Once you're able to judge technique and range, the next step—vital to effect suitable blocks and counters—is judgement of timing. For example, if you block an incoming kick at it's moment of impact, you are going to get hurt. His kick will have momentum, and you'll be taken by the speed. To block or bring your opponent down, you must aim to stop him before the kick has time to build up power, or after the kick has passed through the impact zone. Only in this way can you block and destabilize your opponent effectively.

You then lead him on and counter. In order to develop this sense of timing for your blocks and counters, think when you train. I used to train with string hanging from the ceiling, aiming punches and kicks at its end, then countering according to its movement. Only if you train until you can hit the tip of the string accurately—and its movements are very complex—will you have no trouble in countering in a real fight.

If you and your opponent both kick at the same time, don't give up, simultaneously punch him. You have to learn to strike with a different technique at the very moment you think it's impossible.

To counter, judge your opponents technique precisely, then hit him before he has time to recover his stance.

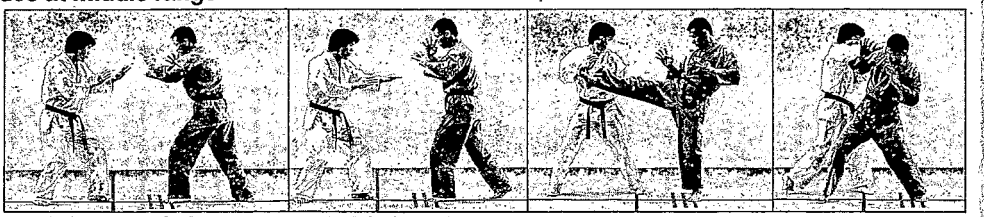
You should start your counterattack before his kicking foot has landed, aiming to hit him just as it touches down. Make a split second judgement as to where your target (face, chin, body, kicking leg, pivot leg) is going to be at the moment of touchdown.

RANGE AND CONTROL TECHNIQUES

The basics of control techniques are attacking and felling your opponent from just the right range. A technique employed without paying proper attention to range, such as a short punch thrown at long range, is obviously not going to reach its target and, other than as a feint, is a waste of time. For each range, there are techniques you *can* and techniques you *can't* use. Understand this, learn to change range through footwork, and you will be able to use the techniques properly and effectively.

• Control techniques at middle range

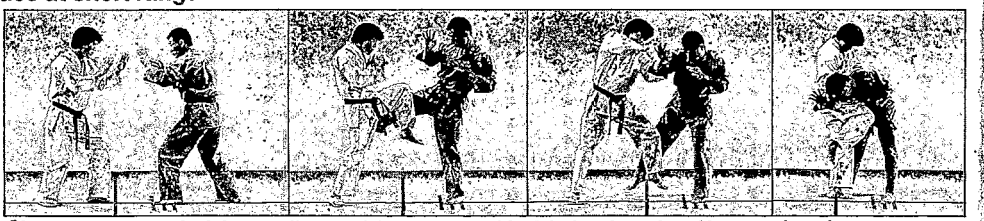
At middle range there are many forms of control techniques in response to various patterns of attack. Combine instepping/outstepping to dodge the impact of your opponent's technique, then attack.



At middle range, block your opponent's right front kick with a left outside block while stepping in, then counter with a right punch (outside block→p. 66).

• Control techniques at short range

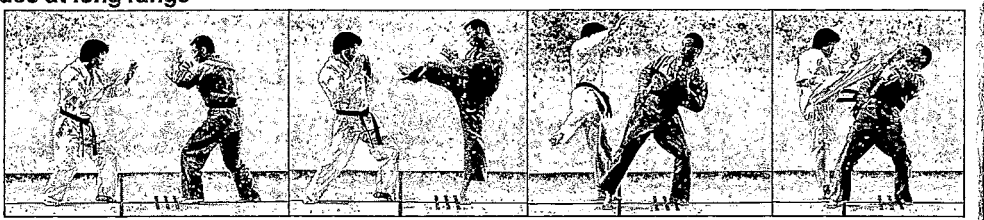
At close range, it is best to shut down your opponent's kicks before they reach their point of impact. If you step back into middle range you may be in trouble, so try to stick close to him and use control techniques. Hand blocks and balance-breaking are indispensable.



Stop your opponent's right roundhouse kick with a knee block before its point of impact, dropping your blocking leg in front of you, then, breaking his stance with your hands, finish him with a knee strike.

• Control techniques at long range

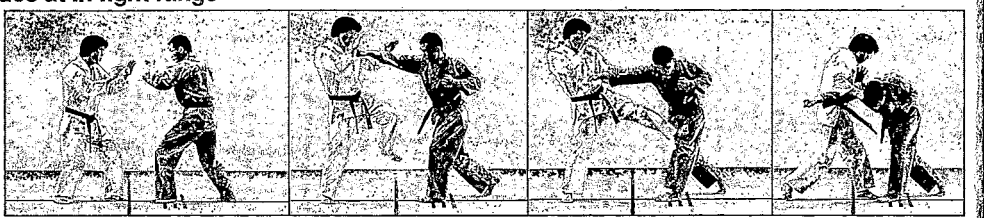
At long range, dodge your opponent's attack, then if he drops his kicking leg forward, counter; if he takes it back, use that backward motion to step in quickly and attack.



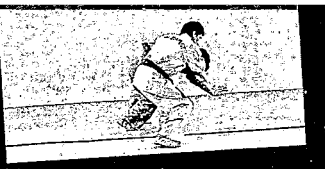
Weave your upper body to dodge your opponent's right roundhouse kick, then just as his body drops forward, counter with a high kick.

• Control techniques at in-fight range

At in-fight range, hand blocks (pushing, pulling and guarding) become vital. As you break your opponent's stance, attack him with your counter. Step in still closer to him and throw him or hit him with knee strikes.



Anticipate your opponent's punch, then hit him with a stopping kick as he falls; follow up with a right punch.



ASHIHARA FIGHTING KARATE

FROM BASICS TO REAL FIGHTING PROFICIENCY

WHY THE NEED FOR BASICS?

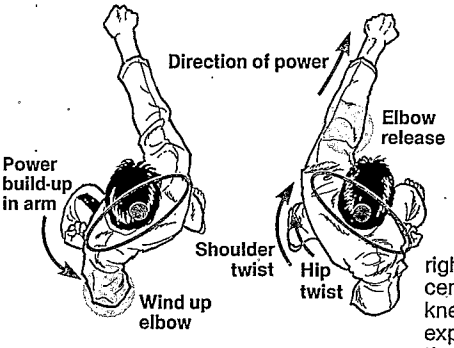
By practicing *basics,* we mean practicing punches, blocks and kicks from the basic stances—the pigeon-toe sance, the natural stance, the front-leaning stance, the horseback stance and the heels-together stance. Such training is the traditional way yet recently, for some strange reason, many people have started to view it rather lightly. Some have jumped to the conclusion that I am an opponent of traditional karate, because I have rethought traditional karate *kata* and developed the Ashihara Control Technique Kata, but this is not true. What I have done rather is modernize karate *kata,* something I deemed essential to meet the needs of modern street fights.

Traditional basic karate training is in no way obsolete. It is an ideal method of training each part of the body to the limit of its efficency. Those who seek to denigrate it, obviously don't understand what karate is about.

Understand your body

Taking the punch as an example, through basic training we seek to attain stability of the lower body, sufficient twist in the hips and a sharp penetrating strike. In a fight, footwork (in step) is essential in order to add speed and power to your punch and yet the step is often used to cover the fact that the punch itself lacks real power. If we say the force of the punch is a six and that of the step four, the two combined may give you ten. But if you don't develop the punch itself to a force of ten in speed and power through basic training, and then add to it the four of the step—which will give you fourteen—you aren't going to be able to cope in a real fight.

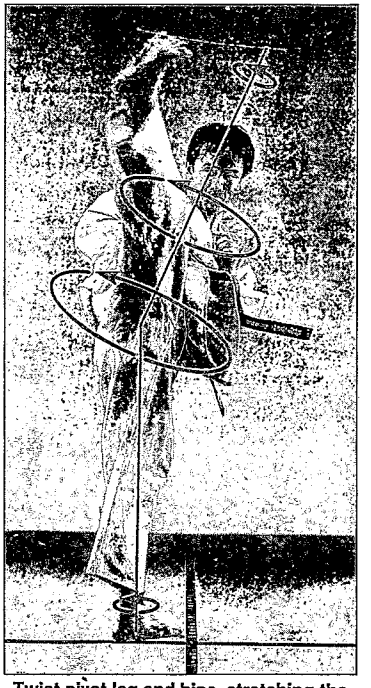
In the case of blocks, basic training is devoted to developing the explosive power necessary to successfully repel your opponent's attack. In basic training, power is concentrated into that moment of impact. In a real fight, it is best to think of blocking as the ability to gently switch the direction of an opponent's momentum and so throw him off balance. However, if your hand lacks speed and power at the moment it makes contact with the opponent's technique, you will just be leaving yourself open to him. At that moment of contact, whether hand to hand or foot to foot, if your strength does not exceed that of your opponent, you are going to be pushed back. It is crucial that you develop that explosive power. Those who say basics don't have any practical use, don't understand their purpose.



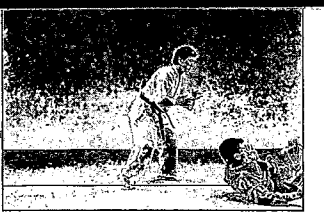
For each and every technique there is a suitable application. It is useless to ignore this and try to apply all blocks against all types of attack. For example, if you try to block your opponent's right punch with a left inside block, you will finish up with your mouth on the end of his follow-up left punch.

You should also bear in mind that to spend all your time learning *kata* during basic training, will be a waste of time. It is only by understanding the *reasons* for doing basic training that those basics will be of benefit in a real fight.

You can learn a lot by practicing the basics. The illustrations on the left show middle straight punches as practiced during basic training: a right followed by a left. Power is concentrated in the fist by twisting the knees, hips and shoulders and the explosive extension of the arm from the elbow. You create a build-up of energy through the twist in your hips and by pulling your fist right back, which bursts at the moment of impact as your hips twist back again.



Twist pivot leg and hips, stretching the hip joint. Turn the upperbody leading with the elbow. The body turn with the spine as axis creates power.



The power in a techinque originates from the twist of the hips with the spine as the axis. The ability to make this twist smoothly and sharply in a split second is what deermines whether or not your blow will "cut" in a real fight. The photograph shows a back roundhouse kick, the power and speed of this technique also coming only from the twist of the hips with the spine as axis. If you don't master this twist in basic training, when you try the technique in a real fight, your pivot leg will be shaky and your kick will lack both balance and power.

Learn thoroughly one by one each of the techniques which I go on to explain in the book and you will progress quickly. Furthermore, if you master the basics properly as a beginner, when you encounter a difficult patch at a more advanced level, by referring back to your knowledge of basic movements, you will be able to trace the cause of your problems easily. Recovery from a slump is faster for those who work hard at the basics—that recovery being a definite step up on the ladder or progress. By contrast, slumps for those who don't work at basics will linger on. Like someone lost in a maze, they won't be able to work out why their opponent can read their techniques so easily, or why they can't fell their opponent. Some will leave karate for good.

It is difficult to correct a bad habit just by being told by someone else. The key is to realize where the bad points lie yourself. Practice of basics acts as a searchlight to help you hunt out the bad points; it is a mirror which will show up your problems. Without basics, your ability to apply your knowledge in a real situation will never develop.

Without basics you cannot progress.

Learning the rhythm of the moment

As well as learning the correct way to use your body, basic training also aims to develop the timing and rhythm necessary to concentrate power. To put it another way, timing and rhythm are the alternation of relaxation and tension. A fraction of a second of relaxation and a fraction of a second of tension. For example, in everyday running and climbing the stairs, as one foot kicks off from the ground, the other foot lands. The moment of kick off and landing is one of tension. The movement in between is relaxed. It is thanks to this alternation that we move. If there was only tension, power would not be concentrated. It is due to the relaxation and the conservation of strength that power may be generated.

Ashihara basic training is all about being aware of these actions, and applying them: something we all do unconsciously every day. It aims to help you understand this momentary conservation and concentration of power (in kick and punch penetration), and use it in control techniques and in real fight. Many opportunities to fell an opponent will arise, but they will be momentary. You must see the gap and flatten him in an instant. You must be able to knock him down in the time it takes to clap your hands. Basic training teaches you how to perform a technique in a split second.

■Progressing through basics

Perform the basics as on the chart below. There's no need to spend ages over them half-heartedly; work with maximum concentration. Start each technique with the right, finishing on the left. Do all sorts of combinations of the various techniques you aim to practice; speed up on the last four or five.

Punches

1) middle straight punch
2) upper straight punch
3) straight to the chin
4) backhand face strike
5) backhand right/left face strike
6) backhand spleen strike
7) roundhouse punch
8) close punch
9) elbow strike

Blocks

10) high block
11) middle outside block
12) inside block
13) low parry
14) inside low parry
15) roundhouse block. Follow each block with a reverse straight punch.

Kicks

16) front high kick
17) knee stride
18) groin kick
19) front kick
20) roundhouse kick
21) side high kick
22) side kick
23) joint kick

24) circular reverse punch
25) front block
26) step and punch, reverse punch, step and kick.

ASHIHARA KARATE Training Program

Master *rational* karate with a *rational* system

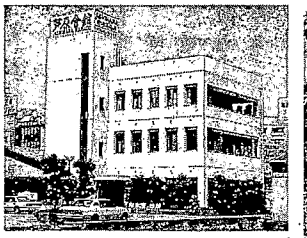
I don't say that karate is easy to master. I've been training for over 20 years and still feel I can learn. The further you follow the path, the more you come to realize the depth of both karate and human ability. Given this fact, it is no use just bellowing out "give it 100%" or "practice till you can do it without thinking" and then expect people to understand. Apart from anything else, the instructor is likely to lose his voice! A rational teaching system that is both convincing and takes account of the students' varying levels is necessary to teach rational karate. You can only learn it in a rational way. I belive that Ashihara karate alone achieves this.

My karate has developed through my own experience in fights, so you might think me presumptuous to speak of a 'rational' system. Through the fight experience of having either to down an opponent or be downed myself, I have learnt to skin off all that was unnecessary and forced. My karate is not armchair karate, nor does it consist of absurd movements that no one else can master. The movements I have developed are based on basic body movements, which any man or woman can perform.

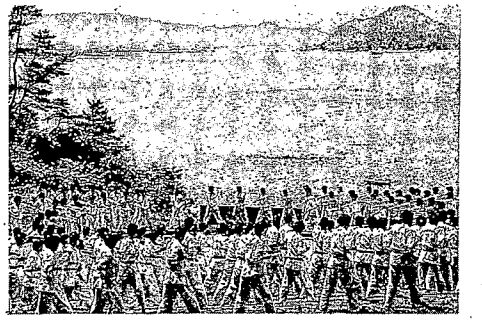
What is the best way to fell someone? I've been obsessed with this question since I was a teenager. My training consisted only of attack. The karate I taught when I opened my first dojo in Yawatahama twenty years ago, was karate that consisted only of felling the opponent. Those students who came to me to learn karate were taught only the knock-down variety. Not surprisingly, since knocking down was the only aim, there were those students who always tended to be felled themselves. Many would quit, and never dream of starting up again. So in effect I was denying the opportunity of learning karate to many who had come along to give it a try. In time, I noticed this shortcoming. Karate is not there to ensure the survival of the strongest, rather it should be a means by which the weak may, with a certain amount of effort, become able to fell the strong. To that end, it is vital to teach the correct way to block your opponent and utilize his own power against him. Only a bad teacher would teach his students to soak up an opponent's attacks with their bodies.

In order not to repeat my shortcomings as a teacher 20 years ago, I set about reforming my system through much trial and error to enable the members of my school to master the art of blocking enjoyably and accurately.

The author guiding students at summer camp.



The Matsuyama headquarters of Ashihara karate, Shikoku, Japan.

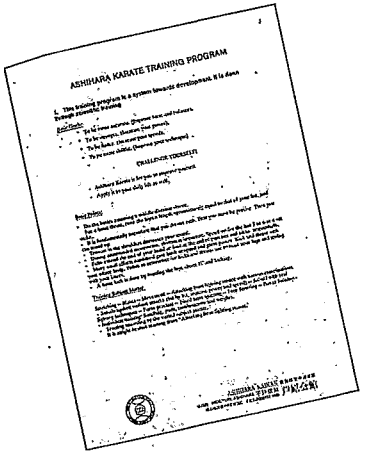


→ Scene at the '86 summer camp. Student exchange is the camp's aim.

Make the most of little time

Students want to learn karate and so do businessmen. In these busy times, you're lucky if you can devote more than one hour a day to karate on top of work or whatever. A manual had to be devised, therefore, whereby a student could raise his standard at a regular pace through concentrated short-period sessions. In Ashihara karate, the training method alters according to the length of time available—one hour, an hour and a half or two hours. If, for example,

Training at an overseas dojo.



The training manual given to students is a ten-page summary of the Ashihara karate training method

there is one hour for the class, maybe four warming-up excercises and ten speed training excercises will be selected. Two or three types of block, kick and punch will be chosen one week, those missed out being practiced the following week. The first 25 minutes are devoted to the basics, the remainder being given to some specific theme, such as control techniques and so on. If you use the time efficiently, a lot of ground can be covered in one hour. The length of time for which the average person can concentrate is limited as it is. It is far better to learn through short, intensive sessions, rather than lengthy, rambling training periods. Ashihara karate is all about enjoying learning, and taking up the challenge to strengthen both body and spirit.

Types of *kata* and the order in which they are learnt

Be = beginner's kata
Ba = basic kata
Th = throwing kata
Sp = sparring kata
F = fighting kata
Se = self-defense kata

kata / belt	Be			Ba					Th					Sp					F					Se				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
white	•			•					•																			
blue		•												•														
yellow			•		•					•					•									•				
green						•					•					•			•						•			
brown							•	•				•					•			•							•	
black													•					•			•	•	•				•	•

An additional aspect of the system is that Control Technique Kata are also taught to suit the student's level. For details see p.146.

Ashihara basic promotion system

(including time required before exam can be taken).

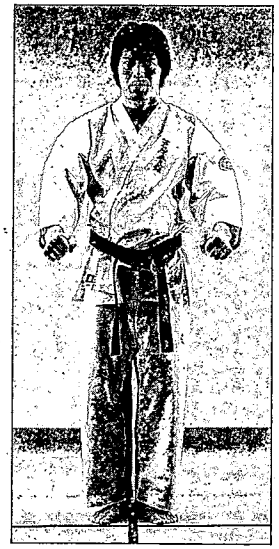
Kyu	White belt	10	First grading 2–3 months after joining club
		9	
	Blue belt	8	min. 2–3 months after joining club
		7	
	Yellow belt	6	min. 6 months after joining club
		5	
	Green belt	4	min. 1 year after joining club
		3	
	Brown belt	2	min. 1.5–2 years after joining club
		1	
Dan	Black belt	1	min. 2 years after joining club
		2	min. 2 years after 1st *Dan*
		3	min. 3 years after 2nd *Dan*
		4	min. 3 years after 3rd *Dan*
		5	min. 3 years after 4th *Dan*
		6	min. 4 years after 5th *Dan*
		7	min. 5 years after 6th *Dan*
		8	min. 6 years after 7th *Dan*
		9	min. 7 years after 8th *Dan*

The chart simply illustrates the grades obtainable at tests. An attendance rate of 60% is a minimum eligibility requirement for the tests. *Dan* and *Kyu* grades are not in themselves the object—they are a guide to progress only.

STANCE

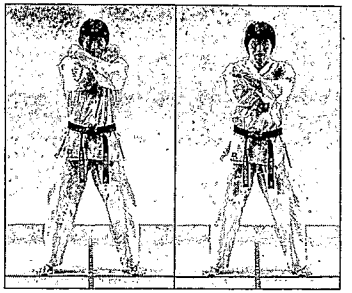
Non-rigid stances

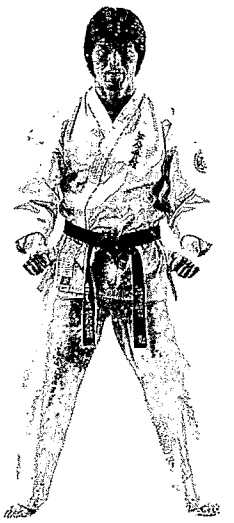
The basic karate stances are the natural (immobile) stance, the heels-together stance, the pigion-toe stance, the front-leading stance, the horseback stance and the fighting stance. In all these pull in your chin and don't tense up. There are four other stances rarely used in Ashihara karate but you might as well know their names. They are the closed feet, the parallel, the toes-out and the toes-in stances.

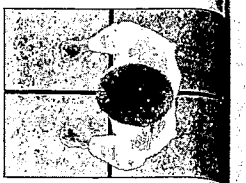


Natural (immobile) stance

Have feet shoulder-width apart, and relax. Used when practicing strikes, front kicks, roundhouse kicks and other basic techniques. When practicing kicks from this stance hold the front of your belt with both hands.)



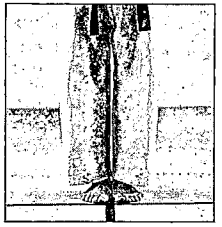




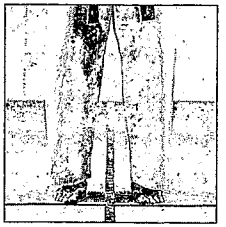
From this stance all basics and *kata* are begun. If you tense up you will not be able to move smoothly.

Heels-together stance

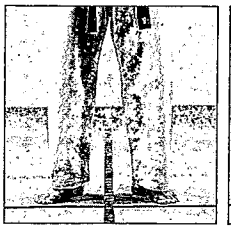
Narrow your stance from the natural stance, heels should be touching, with a fist's width between your big toes. Practice high side kicks, side kicks and joint kicks in this stance.



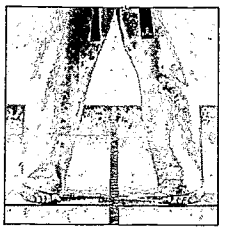
closed feet stance



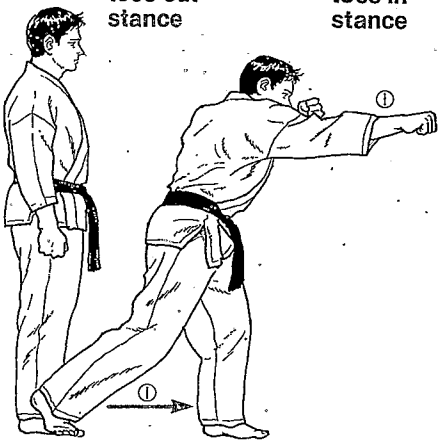
parallel stance



toes-out stance



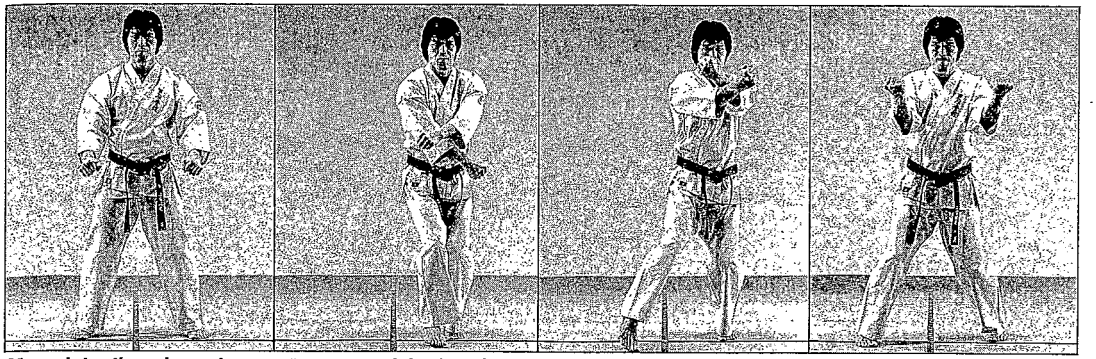
toes-in stance



The fight begins the moment you take a step forward.

Taking a step forward is your declaration of war. From this moment, in sparring, but particularly in self-defense, you must be able to punch and kick. In Ashihara karate when assuming the fighting stance from the natural stance, step forward with your left leg.

THE PIGEON-TOE STANCE



Move into the pigeon-toe stance from the natural stance.

Move your right foot in a clockwise circle towards your left foot, at the same time drawing both arms across in front of you.

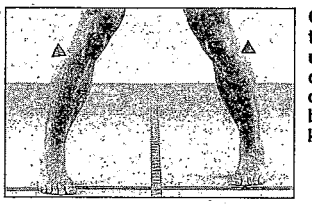
Move your right foot back in a circle to half a step to half a step forward of your left foot. Guard your ribs.

Keeping your elbows in, move into the stance.

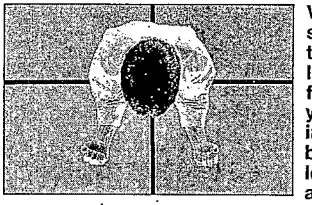
Slightly bend your knees and hips, leaning forward a touch. Keep your center of gravity low.

The pigion-toe stance

Used for basic practice of punches, backhands and blocks. Right foot forward knees squeezed slightly inwards. If you squeeze them in too much, you won't be able to utilize the twist in your knees and hips; but if there is insufficient "squeeze" then your knees will point out and your techniques will lack finish. (Practice it also with left foot forward when you train by yourself)
Main points to look out for: ankles, knees, hips—and make sure you keep your elbows in



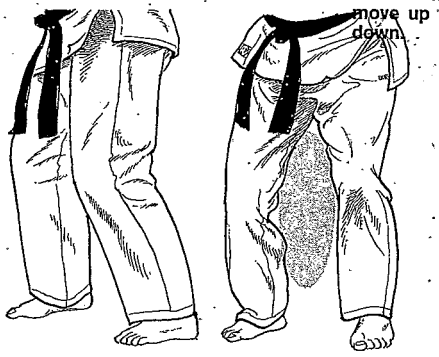
Check from the bottom up: position of feet, angle of ankles, bend and knee tension.



Weight should be distributed equally over both feet, keep your elbows in tight to the body, don't let your kees and hips move up and down.

◎ Pigeon-toe to fighting stance

From the correct pigeon-toe stance, twist on the balls of your feet into the fighting stance.



◎ Why you can't use a pigeon-toe stance with feet too far apart

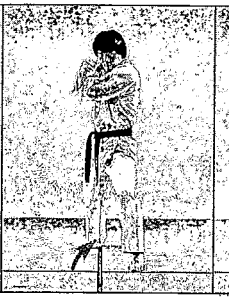
If your feet are too wide apart when you move into the fighting stance, you leave your inner leg and groin area wide open to attack. It is not a practical stance.

FRONT-LEANING HORSEBACK STANCE

Front-leaning stance

Used for basic practice to make each technique more dynamic. With your upper body side-on, pull your back leg right back, and by using your hips you can add great power to a kick. Weight distribution is 40% over the back leg, 60% over the front, shifting all your weight onto the front as you start a kick. This weight shift is an important point, the power of your kick being generated by it and the hip twist.

Start from natural stance



Move your right foot back in a circle.

Perform a lower block, keeping elbows tight into your body, moving your arm down from the elbow.

Pull your other arm back with hip twist.

Photos (middle) (left): For all stances you must make sure your knees don't drift outwards. If your knee turns outward when you kick or punch, all your power goes with it. Imagine a wall just to the side of your knee when you train to help ensure that the knee doesn't move out. At the moment of impact, all your weight sould be over your front leg, the knee as main support.

If you lean too far over your front foot, you will lose all your power and flexibility.

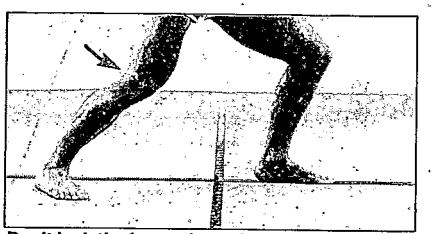
The horseback stance

Feet should be twice as wide as in the natural stance. Take care over the angle of your knees and hips; keep your center of gravity low. This stance is used for the practice of uppercuts, elbow strikes and the basic throws.

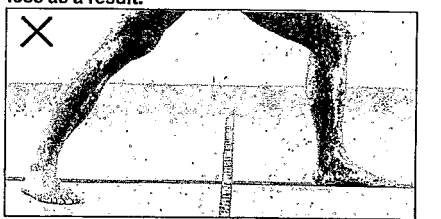
Bend your knees and ankles, keeping them flexible. Your lower body should be stable.

You should be leaning slightly forwards, hips drawn back a little, knees bent.

Side stance. Practice weight shift for side and back kicks from this stance.

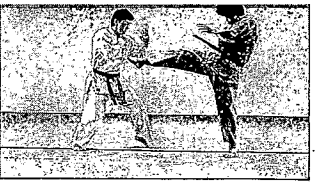


Don't lock the knee of your back leg in the front-leaning stance. If you do, you won't be able to twist your hips, and your punch will be powerless as a result.



A bad forward-leaning stance. Here the knee is locked, preventing body movement.

FIGHTING STANCE



Natural stance. It is also the ready stance before practice.

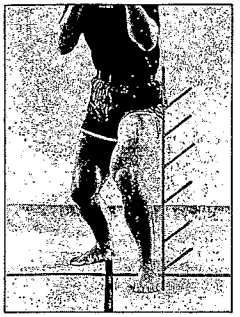
Step forward with the left leg into fighting stance, upper body side-on.

Always face your opponent in side-on position, with left leg, knee and fist vertically in line.

The Ashihara fighting stance is similar to the traditional back-leaning stance. The feet should be about shoulder-width apart, the upper body nearly side-on, with weight evenly distributed over both feet. Make sure that the knee of your front leg is directly over the toes, a vertical line connecting the two. The front leg is the base of pivotal energy for kicks with the back leg. In orthodox style, the right hand always guards the face and is on a straight line to your opponent.

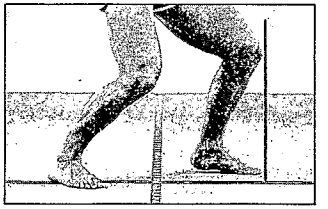
• Never forget to guard the face

When you assume the fighting stance from the natural (ready) stance, as you take a step forward to bring your feet to shoulder width, upper body side-on to your opponent, cross your hands in front of your face. This movement of the hands is good practice for your guard. Your hands can either be open or clenched, but make sure your guard doesn't drop below your chin.



• Imagine a wall to your left

As with the forward leaning stance, imagine a wall just to the outside of your knee to prevent it from turning.



• Tension in ankles and knees

Keep spring in your ankles and knees. The knee of your front leg should be directly over the toes.

• Bad fighting stances

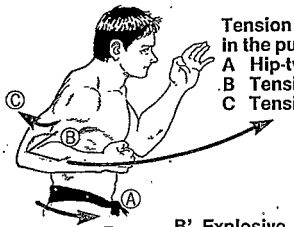
Everyone tends to develop individual characteristics in their fighting stance. However, if these faults aren't corrected, and a good form adopted, they result in a great loss in power and speed. For example, there are those who fight out of the front-leaning stance, who, when they move for a technique, first narrow their stance to one similar to that of Ashihara karate. If this is the case, why then do they not begin in such a stance? Unnecessary movements create gaps which your opponent will use to fell you. Take a good look at the photos on the right and don't make the same mistakes yourself.

Arms too wide of the body. A quick way to broken ribs: you're open to attack.

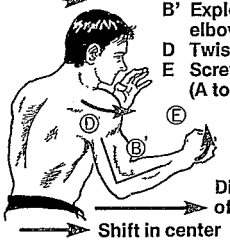
Guard too low. Right foot is pointing too far out, which makes movement difficult.

Too much weight over the rear leg. Difficult to launch quick attacks.

TENSION AND SPRING



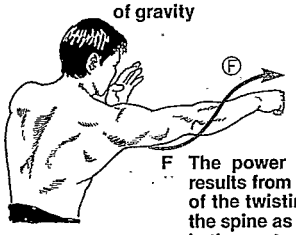
Tension and spring in the punch.
A Hip-twist
B Tension in the elbow
C Tension in the arm



B' Explosive spring in the elbow
D Twist in the shoulders
E Screwing action of the fist
(A to E all happen at once)

Direction of power

Shift in center of gravity



F The power of the punch results from a combination of the twisting action with the spine as pivot, the shift in the center of gravity and the explosive release of tension, all of which is concentrated in the fist.

Middle straight punch the moment before impact. The speedier and sharper and the turn (indicated by the arrows), the more powerful the punch. If you let your knee point outwards, the power will be cost.

The power from the twisting movement of your body should explode through your target helped by the snapping open of your elbow.

Tesnion and spring

Tension involves bending all joints as well as contracting muscle. It is only by releasing this tension at the moment of impact that power is generated. Spring describes the movement from contraction to release. The relative strength of the spring determines power and speed. In the Ashihara fighting stance, the front leg is so positioned that the point of the toe and the knee are in a straight line. The ankle angle is 60° to 80°. It is this angle that generates explosive power.

This is only one example, but in Ashihara karate basic training, we pay special attention to creating the most effective use of spring in technique.

• Shift in center of gravity and tension

In a real fight, there are many ways in which you can break up your opponent's attack through shifting your center of gravity from the basic fighting stance. The main thing to remember is not to lock your knees and to keep spring in your stance. To be able to counter swiftly, make sure that you incorporate spring into your actions.

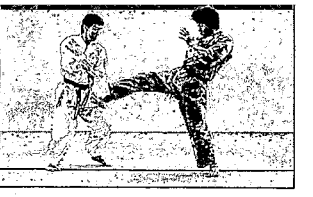
Basic fighting stance. Make sure there's tension in your ankles and knees.

When you shift your center of gravity forward as you close in to your opponent, the tension increases.

When you pull your center of gravity back, you build tension in your back leg at the knee.

Bringing your front foot half a pace back creates tension in the knee of the back leg.

Counter by first stepping back. Release the tension instantaneously.



Ashihara karate techniques in Japanese

- punch ..... tsuki
- strike ..... uchi
- block ..... uke
- parry ..... harai
- kick ..... keri
- throw ..... nage

Positions • ichi
- outside ..... soto
- inside ..... uchi
- back ..... ushiro
- both sides ..... sayu
- reverse ..... gyaku
- half body ..... hanmi

Stances • tachi
- ready stance ..... yoi dachi
- pigeon-toe stance ..... sanchin dachi
- front-leaning stance ..... zenkutsu dachi
- back-leaning stance ..... kokutsu dachi
- horseback stance ..... kiba dachi
- heels-together stance ..... musubi dachi
- closed feet stance ..... heisoku dachi
- fighting stance ..... kumite no kamae

Hands • te
- fore-fist ..... seiken
- backhand ..... uraken
- handsword ..... shuto
- handspear ..... nukite
- wrist ..... koken
- palm heel ..... shotei
- forearm ..... kote
- elbow ..... hiji

Feet • ashi
- ball of foot ..... chusoku
- instep ..... haisoku
- knife edge of foot ..... sokuto
- knee ..... hiza
- heel ..... kakato

Punch • tsuki
- middle straight punch ..... seiken chudan zuki
- upper straight punch ..... seiken jodan zuki
- straight to the chin ..... seiken ago uchi
- close punch ..... shitazuki
- backhand face strike ..... uraken ganmen uchi
- backhand side strike ..... uraken sayu uchi
- backhand spleen strike ..... uraken mizo uchi
- roundhouse punch ..... mawashi uchi
- elbow strike ..... hiji uchi
- high elbow strike ..... hijiage uchi
- roundhouse elbow strike ..... mawashi hiji uchi
- step and punch ..... oi zuki
- step and reverse punch ..... gyaku zuki

Blocks • uke
- high block ..... jodan uke
- middle outside block ..... chudan soto uke
- middle inside block ..... chudan uchi uke
- low parry ..... gedan barai
- roundhouse block ..... mawashi uke
- handsword block ..... shuto uke
- leg hook ..... hikkake
- elbow block; kneeblock ..... hiji uke, hiza uke

Kicks • keri
- front kick ..... mae geri
- high front kick ..... mae keriage
- back kick ..... ushiro geri
- backroundhouse kick ..... ushiro mawashi geri
- roundhouse kick ..... mawashi geri
- triangle kick ..... sankaku geri
- groin kick ..... kinteki geri
- side kick ..... yoko geri
- high side kick ..... yoko keriage
- joint kick ..... kansetsu geri
- knee strike ..... hiza geri
- heel kick ..... kakato geri
- hook kick ..... spin kikku
- low inside kick ..... uchimomo geri
- sweep to pivot leg ..... jikuashi geri
- step and kick ..... oigeri

Miscellaneous
- turning forwards ..... maemawari
- turning backwards ..... ushiromawari
- forwards throw ..... makikomi nage
- backwards throw ..... ura nage
- coup de grace ..... todome
- step in and kick ..... kerikomi
- body moving in ..... hairimi
- absorb impact ..... kyushu
- judgement ..... mikiri
- ready ..... yoi
- take up stance ..... kamaete
- return to ready stance ..... naotte
- stop, finish ..... yame
- meditation ..... mokuso
- bow to teacher ..... rei

PUNCHES

■ Basic practice routine

① middle straight punch

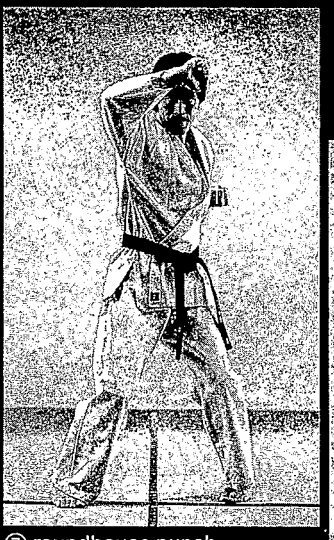
② upper straight punch

③ straight to the chin

④ backhand face strike

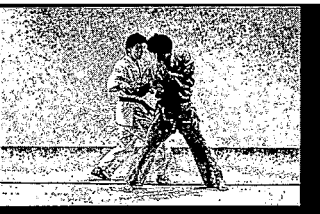
⑤ backhand right-left strike

⑥ backhand spleen strike



⑦ roundhouse punch

⑧ close punch



⑨ elbow strike

• Basic practice

Check your technique from the bottom up and from the point closest to your center of gravity

For each technique, start off slowly and carefully. For punches start off with 4-6 slow ones. For speed training, depending on the individual, 8-10-12-14: don't overdo it. On the last 4 or 6, up the speed and pace.

For all the basics, imagine short, middle and long range situation as you practice. The closer the range, the greater the importance of tension (contraction) in the drawn back arm.

For all physical movement, aim for maximum contraction in muscles and joints, and then maximum release (straightening).

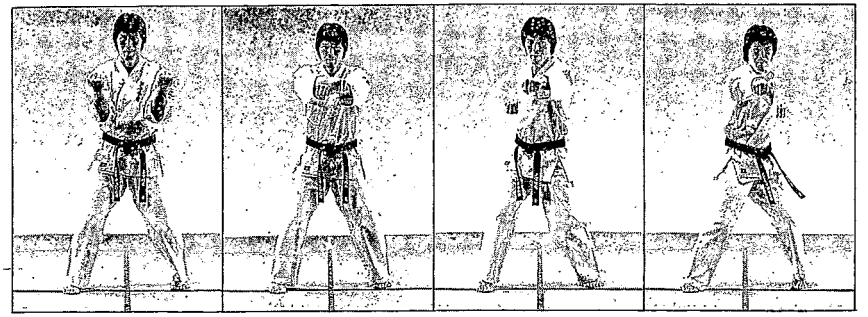
Points to watch for basic strikes

- Is your lower body stable, with both knees flexible and supple?
- Is there enough tension in your knees?
- Is your waist too high?
- Are your ribs exposed?
- Is there sufficient twist in your knees and hips?
- Are your shoulders tense?
- Is your chin pulled in?
- Are you leaning forward slightly?
- Are you clenching your fist only at the moment of impact?
- Are you striking with your knuckles and elbow point?
- Are you pulling back your fist (or elbow) quickly enough?
- Is power being concentrated at the moment of impact?
- Is your upper body wobbling from side-to-side?
- Is your wrist at a right angle to the target on every punch?

Power should amount to 80-90% in the punching arm, the remainder being employed in the arm being pulled back. In your basic training, aim to increase the speed of the punching action.

Basic practice is carried out from a stationary position, in order to develop explosive power without stepping in, simply through the twist of the hips and shoulders. This will enable you increase both your power and your speed.

MIDDLE STRAIGHT PUNCH



Ready stance to the pigion-toe stance and middle straight punch.

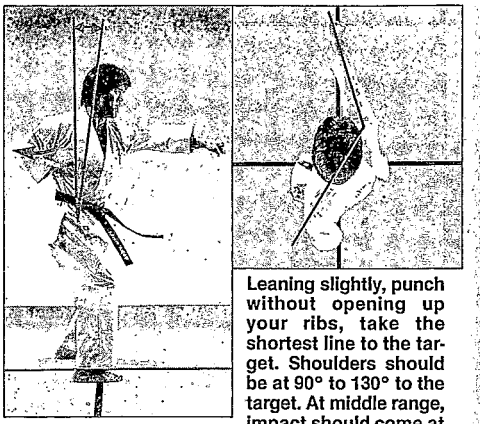
Cross both wrists straight in front of you (for a middle range punch), and select point of impact.

Draw back your right arm like a bow. Concentrate your power and punch through you target, twisting at hips and shoulders with the spine as pivot.

The knee corresponding to the punching hand should turn inward 3-5cm at the moment of impact. Make sure the other knee doesn't drift outwards.

Middle straight punch-strike making maximum use of the pulled-back hand.

Punches won't work if the elbows are out, leaving the ribs open, and if both shoulders and elbows are not behind the punch. The leading hand darts out, releasing the tension created by contraction, fist and elbow moving at the same instant. This applies to all punches. Strike using the snapping open of the elbow, the screwing motion of the fist and the twist of the hips. Remember to pull in your chin, keep springiness in all your joints, maximize twist and lean slightly forward. At the same time as you draw back your hand, twist the hips 10° to 15°. You control the distance of your strike by this hip and shoulder twist.

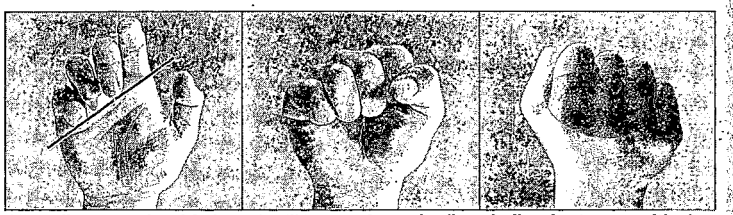


Leaning slightly, punch without opening up your ribs, take the shortest line to the target. Shoulders should be at 90° to 130° to the target. At middle range, impact should come at about 110°.

⊛ A middle straight punch without tension

Not only with the straight punch, but with all punches, power comes from the tension in the hand-back hand. Without it, as in the picture, there is no way you can hope to down your opponent.

⊛ How to clench the fist.

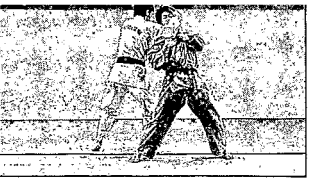


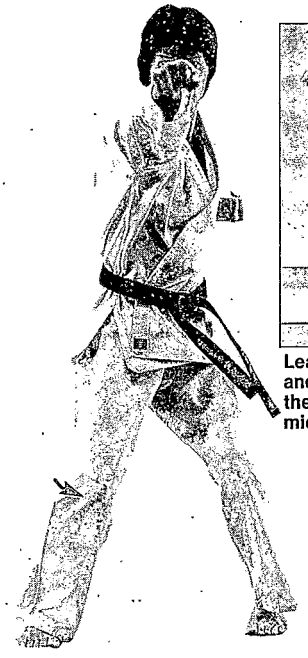
The fingers should be folded tightly, little finger first. Fold over the thumb and clench.

Up till impact keep the fist lightly clenched then, as you strike through your target, tighten it.

Strike the target with the part shown on the photo. Strike in to your target with the wrist at right angles to it.

UPPER STRAIGHT PUNCH

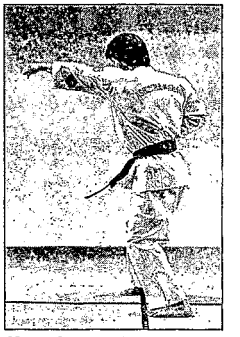




Follow through to eye-level. Lead with the knee corresponding to the punching hand.

Lean slightly forward and select your target in the same way as for the middle punch.

Punch with your right while pulling back sharply with your left. Power distribution should be 8 (for the striking hand) to 2 (for the withdrawing hand).



Keep low and strike the same point with both fists.

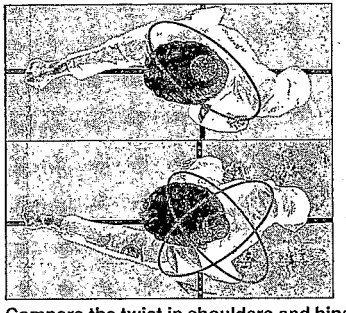
Upper straight punch—aim for the chin/face

This is much the same as the middle straight punch, but delivered higher up. Aim at the chin or face. Follow through till your hand reaches eye-level. Be careful not to overdo things and end up leaning backwards. Don't let your upper body become unstable and allow no vertical movement. If your hips aren't kept low, you will end up leaning backwards after your punch and won't be able to follow up with your next technique. Even more so than in the case of the middle punch, train so that you are always leaning forward slightly, keeping the center of gravity forwards.

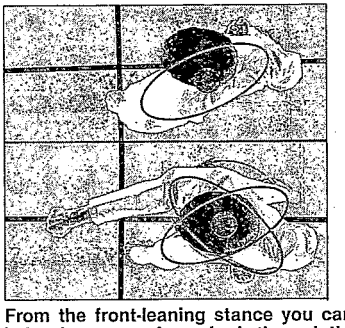
Straight punch from pigeon-toe and front-leaning stances

The straight punch may be practiced from either stance. The punch is actually stronger from the latter due to the fact that the side positioning enables you to draw your hand back further and so get more contraction. Get the feel of the punch from the front-leaning stance, then try to work out ways of releasing the same kind of punch from the pigeon-toe stance.

Remember, tension in the withdrawing arm, twist of the hips, shift in the center of gravity, twist of the shoulders, spring in the knees, and turn of the ankles—you should understand why I am so insistent on all of these points!

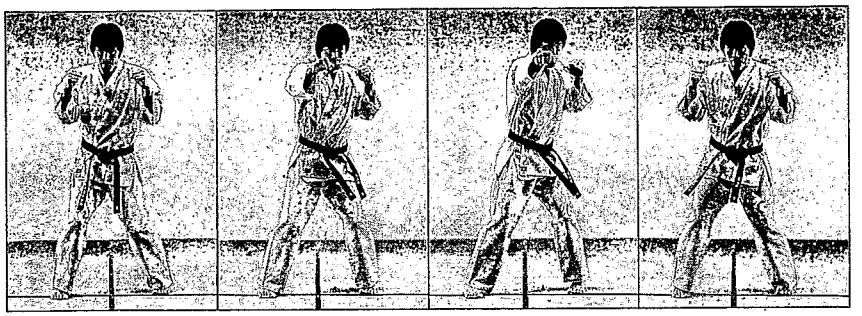


Compare the twist in shoulders and hips of the pigeon-toe stance with that of the front-leaning stance. The difference should be clear. From the pigeon-toe stance you build up speed in the fist through a quick and compact twisting action.



From the front-leaning stance you can maximize the power of your body through the deep pull-back of the hand, the weight shift and the twist of the hips. Ensure there is no "floating" of the hips or the upper body; make the whole action a flowing one.

STRAIGHT TO THE CHIN



In the pigeon-toe stance, raise your fist to shoulder height and close the gap between arms and body.

Explode the punch from the elbow as you pull back the other hand.

Use the twist at knees, hips and shoulders to strike through your target.

Pull back the punch quickly. Keep your upper body stable.

The less the contraction of the arm, the more you will need a sharp twist in the hips and shoulders to increase punch speed.

Straight to the chin

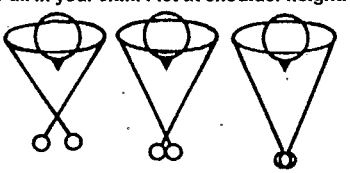
Let your elbows hang naturally, close to your sides. Pull your elbows back a little to create sufficient tension, then twist at the hips and let your elbow explode from your side to make your punch connect with your opponent's chin. Punch and pull back your fist straight down the centerline of your body (the punch and the pull are one movement). Lead with the fist, not the elbow, and concentrate on timing, with the punching and pulling back being carried out simultaneously. Don't forget the screwing action of the fist, and don't expose your ribs, particularly at the start of the movement.

With a little opening sidewards of the elbows, the basic chin punch can become a hook. It can also be turned into an upper or a cross upper (see p. 56)

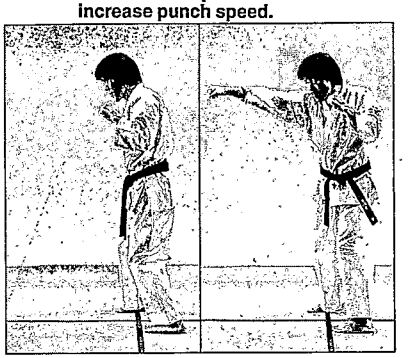
If you turn sideways on from the pigeon-toe stance will find yourself in the Ashihara fighting stance.

Stance for chin punches

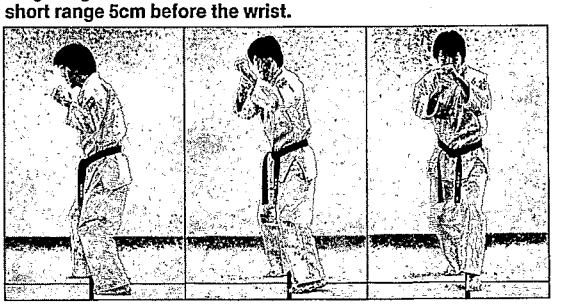
Pull your elbows in tight to build tension. Pull in your chin. Fist at shoulder height.



The target of each punch depends upon the range involved. For middle range, it is the point where both wrists meet, for long range where both fists meet and short range 5cm before the wrist.



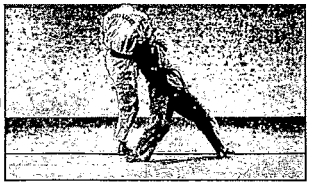
Beginners be careful not to expose your ribs after a succession of punches. Also take care not to lean too far forward.



Turn sideways from the pigeon-toe chin strike stance and you find yourself in the Ashihara basic stance. You will see how your hands become your guard. Bringing back your hand fast after punching not only increases power but is vital in a real fight in order to maintain a guard for your face.

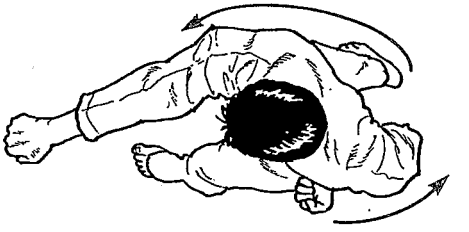
THE STRAIGHT

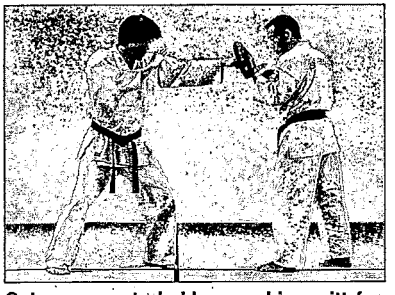
EFFECTIVE USE AND TRAINING



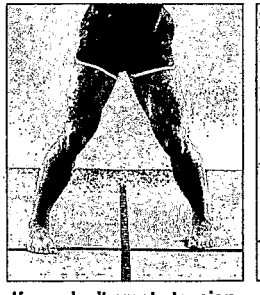
Training in the front-leaning and basic fighting stances

As I said on p.43 practice of the straight punch from the front-leaning position is an absolute must. When you mix the speed acquired from punching practice in the pigeon-toe stance with the dynamic twist learnt from the front-leaning stance in the fighting stance of a real fight, you can punch with real power. In a real fight from the fighting stance, when tension is insufficient, use a jab or a feint to allow you to take the step which will give you the sort of tension you can get in a front-leaning stance. All the basics link up in the actual fight.

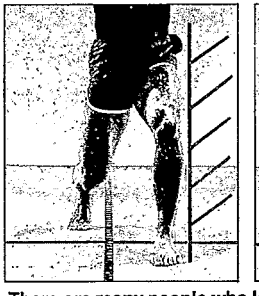


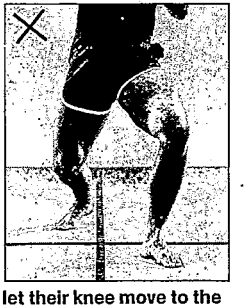


Get someone to hold a punching mitt for you. You have to know that you can punch accurately and correctly. Your wrist and fist should be in a straight line, your punch connecting with the mitt at right angles.



If you don't create tension in your kees during basic practice, in a real fight you won't be able to punch correctly.

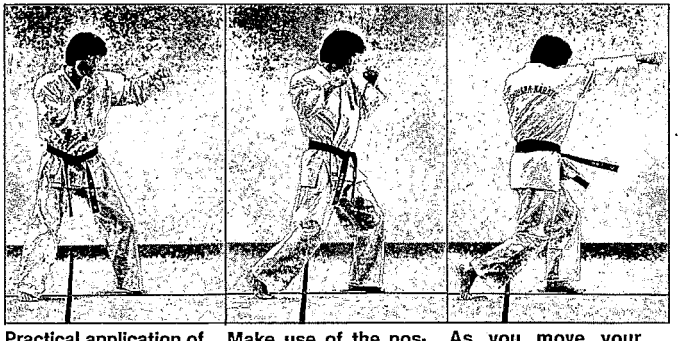




There are many people who let their knee move to the outside in a real fight, often on the step-in punch. Don't forget to imagine a wall next to your knee which stops it drifting outside. The photo at right shows you just how *not* to do it.

The jab—application of the chin punch

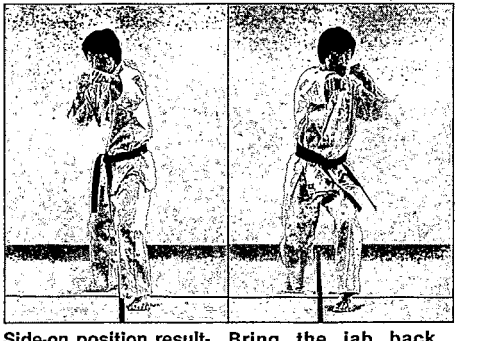
With sufficient sharpness of strike and speed of return, the straight to the chin can be used in a real fight as a jab. The jab is normally used as a counterattack to stop your opponent's advancing attack, but can also be used as a feint. Furthermore, rather than just moving around your opponent using footwork, you can contain him and move more smoothly and safely by constantly jabbing at him. As a result of the side-on position used for the jab you can make use of a considerable amount of spring, and launch a powerful punch.



Practical application of a chin strike: a jab followed by a straight.

Make use of the position created by the returning jab to launch a straight with the other fist.

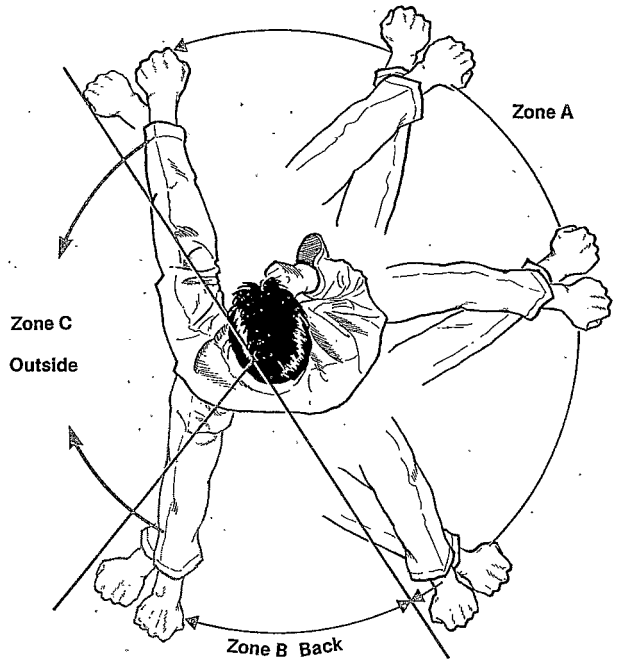
As you move your weight behind the punch, twist at the foot, hips and shoulders.



Side-on position resulting from the jab creates tension in the right punch.

Bring the jab back quickly to guard the face.

STEP AND PUNCH



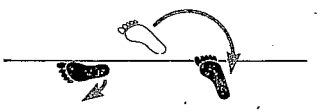
Range awareness

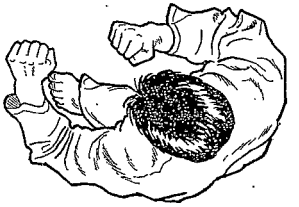
From a fixed fighting stance, taking advantage of twist in the hips and upper body, you can put out a powerful punch at any point over 180°, starting from a point diagonally slightly to the left of front (zone A in the diagram). Naturally, it needs training to effectively cover this wide range. This 'range awareness' therefore corresponds with your field of vision (strike in along a line level with your nose).

If you turn on your toes until you are facing the opposte direction (in the same stance), your effective punching range will expand correspondingly (zone B in the diagram). This zone is, in effect, the back position.

Zone C is your blind spot where you cannot employ an ordinary punch without using a step to change your position. It is an area which requires a back elbow strike, a back handsword strike or possibly a back roundhouse kick. This C zone is known as the "outside". In a fight, if you can position yourself to your opponent's outside, you are 90 percent sure of victory. On the other hand, to prevent your opponent taking your weak outside, you've got to train to give yourself constant 360° cover through fast footwork.

So, footwork is used for both defense and attack in a real fight: it prevents your opponent getting to your weak points while giving you access to his. In case he does manage to get at your weak points, you must also learn to react in a split second with a powerful back elbow strike, a backhand knifehand strike or spinning back hook kick. Always aim for your opponent's weak point whilst guarding your own.

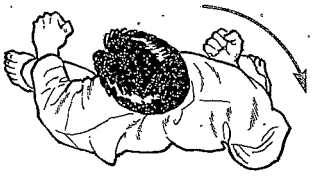




Usual fighting stance. The power of the punch comes from the twist in the hips.

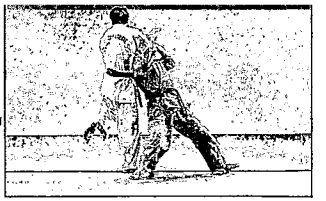
• Step back (outstep) and punch

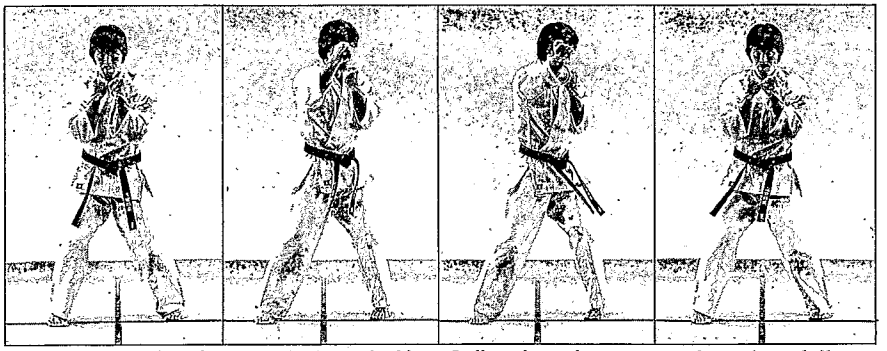
In a real fight, the best way to concentrate power in your punch is to bring your upper body side-on to your opponent (by stepping back), thereby giving yourself sufficient room to draw back your fist and create tension. As you block, simultaneously draw your back leg round in a circle, creating instant spring in your hips, then punch, taking advantage of the difference in power between a punch from the front-leaning stance, that this action will create for you, and that from a normal fighting stance. Your punch will gain great power if you step in with your front leg, and kick the floor with your back leg, so placing all your body weight on the front foot.



A punch taking advantage of the contraction from leaning forward. Step back from the fighting stance and you can punch more powerfully.

BACKHAND FACE STRIKE





Ensure the backs of the hands are facing forward. Don't expose your ribs; keep fists at chin level.

Explode the tucked in arm outward from the upper arm.

Strike through your target by snapping open the elbow.

Make the follow through short, pulling back your hand quickly to the original position.

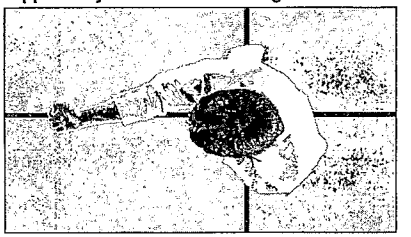
Left backhand following on from the right.Make sure your lower body is stable; don't let your upper body move to the left or right.

Backhand face strike—hit with explosive power

Use this technique after you have blocked his technique, unbalanced him and led him so he is side-on to you.

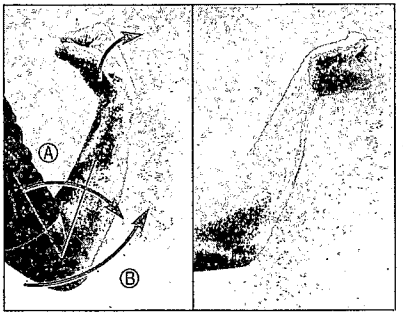
Don't forget to keep up your guard with your other hand as you strike. First, bring your elbows and fists in tight, then hit your opponent in the face with the back of your knuckles. There is a tendency to just flick your hand at him, but avoid this, making sure your hips and shoulders are behind the punch. The arm springs open, and the fist should strike downwards, before pulling it back quickly. Don't lock your elbow. If you lock it you'll end up damaging the elbow joint, so be careful! One you have mastered the basics, concentrate on the snap in the wrist, from just before impact to follow through.

The twist in the shoulders and hips and the spring in the legs, are both the same as for the chin strike. Beginners shouldn't worry too much about the backhand strike, but should concentrate instead on mastering the basic punch, of which this is an extension.

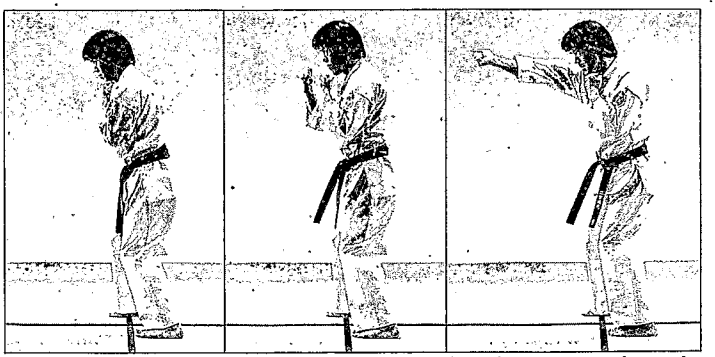


Strike along the body's centerline, as with the straight punch. Your body should always remain stable.

Backhand-impact



Just before impact the elbow springs open (A), and power comes from a combination of this and the upward thrust of the elbow (B).

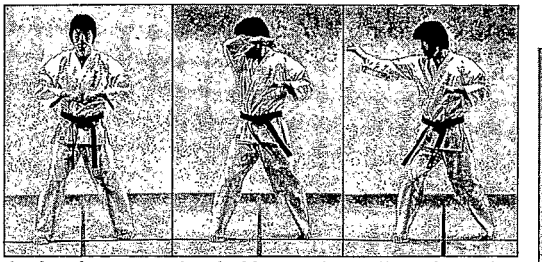


Pull in your chin, tuck your arms into your at chest, then shoot your arm forward to strike through your opponent's chin. At that moment, snap open your wrist.

Backhand side face strike/spleen strike

Backhand side face strike

The strike shown on the previous page is directed at an opponent standing in front of you—this one is directed at an opponent to your side. It can of course be used as part of a control technique, but is more often used as a simple self-defense technique. Start with both fists touching in front of your chest, then, snap open your elbow to the side, striking the opponent to your side in the face. The power which was released forwards in the straight backhand is now released to the right or left side by turning the elbow from the inside to the outside. Extra power in the strike comes from twisting at the hips and swivelling the upper body. Make sure your eyes never leave the target.



In the pigeon-toe stance, bring together both fists in front of your chest.

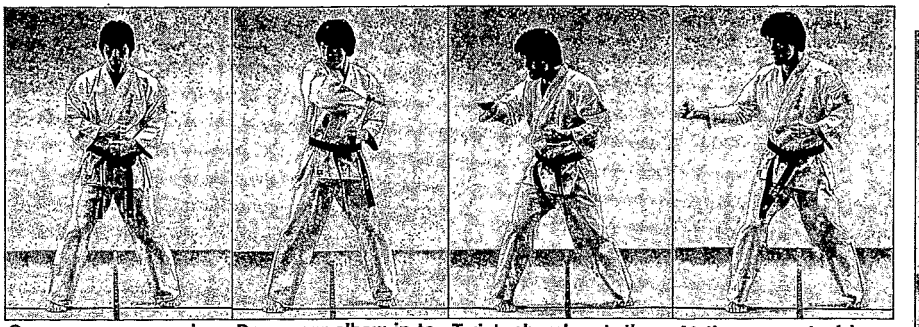
Lead with your elbow, strike with the twist in the hips.

Strike through with snap at the elbow and wrist.

Strike directly to your side in basic practice. Keep your eyes in the direction of your fist to ensure you impact accurately.

Take care that the knee on the side of the striking arm does not drift outwards. Don't overtwist the upper body. Strike with a circular motion, leading with your elbow.

Backhand spleen strike



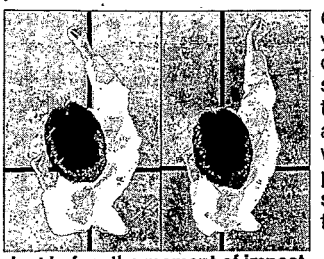
Cross your arms in front of your solar plexus.

Draw your elbow in to create tension, then strike.

Twist sharply at the hips, and "bounce" the fist out from the elbow.

At the moment of impact, snap the wrist.

Strike through your opponent's body hard and fast, "bouncing" out your fist.

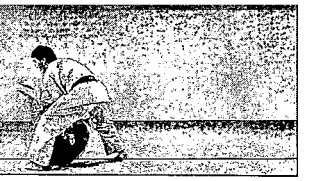


Just before the moment of impact, snap the wrist. Don't open yourself up too much.

Cross your wrists in front of you, keep your elbows close to your side and strike into the opponent's body using the twist of the elbow. Utilize the twisting motion of your hips fully, strike, and pull back instantly. Bring the striking hand back to a position below the other hand and get into the habit of always striking from the correct stance. The snap in the wrist is the same as that for the face strike. For practical application, imagine someone is standing behind you. Practice striking as you step back with the foot corresponding with the punching hand.

Impact should be directly to your side. Keep your eyes on his face

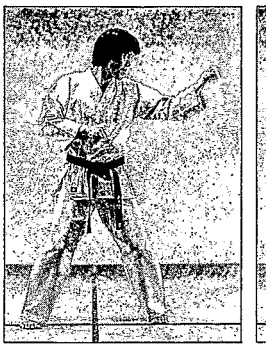
BACKHAND USE IN A REAL FIGHT



Range and the backhand

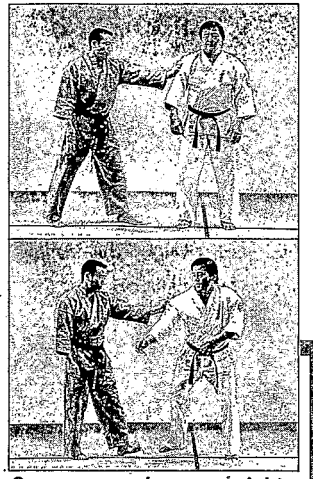
When you use the backhand in a real fight, the movement needs to be small (ideally you should be motionless at the start). It can be used in the handsword variant form, when your opponent is to your side. When someone takes position at your side, backhand is used in the same way as a back handsword strike. In a real fight, vary the angle at which you open the elbow to adapt to the various distances. Don't over-extend your elbow.

Short range backhand: strike with a smaller action.



Middle range: adjust the distance by opening out your elbow.

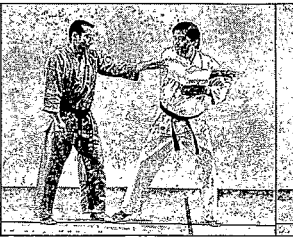
Long range: don't over-extend the elbow.



Someone grabs your right shoulder from the side. If he's close to you, make use of his pulling power to hit him with the minimum of movement.

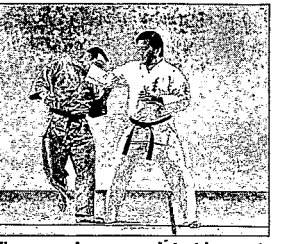
Backhand in self-defense

This can be used to great effect when, for example, someone comes up and grabs your arm from the side. At that moment (or just before), pull back the elbow swiftly and counter. It is particularly effective if you strike at the nose, or just below it, at the cheek bone, eye or the solar plexus. You can also attack the eyes with your hand open.



The moment he grabs you, pull away to free yourself, and simultaneously create tension.

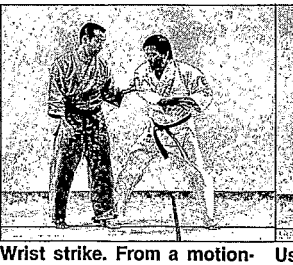
Stepping onto his foot, put your body weight behind a quick strike to his carotid artery.



The snap in your wrist at impact will be enough to send him flying.

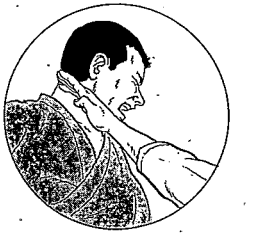
Wrist strike

Using the outside of the wrist in the same way as the backhand, you can cause a lot of damage. Use your free hand to push away from the inside of the striking hand, and put your whole body-weight behind the technique.



Wrist strike. From a motionless position, strike quickly as you step forward and twist.

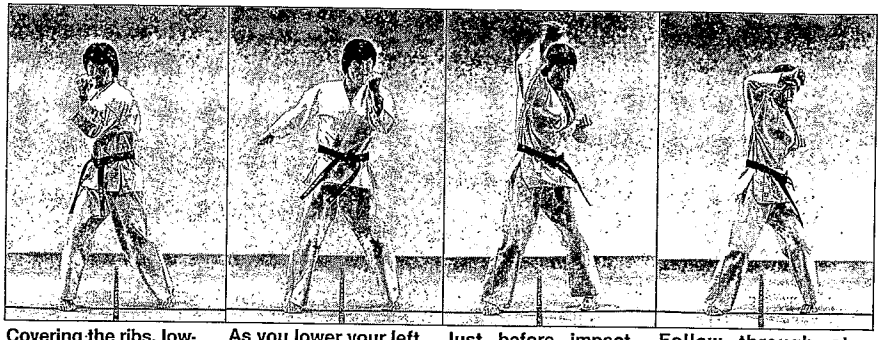
Use your other hand to back up the wrist, putting your whole body weight behind the blow.



Handsword strike to the carotid artery. Strike with the joint of the wrist.

ROUNDHOUSE PUNCH

Basic practice for the roundhouse punch starts with the finishing position of the left hand.



Covering the ribs, lower your left elbow while guarding your face with your fist.

As you lower your left arm, build tension in your right as you bring it up.

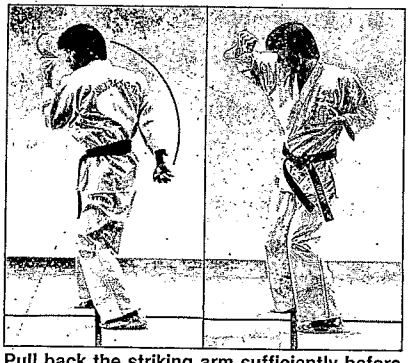
Just before impact, bend your elbow in with plenty of 'snap'.

Follow through at forehead height. Pull back, ready for the next strike.

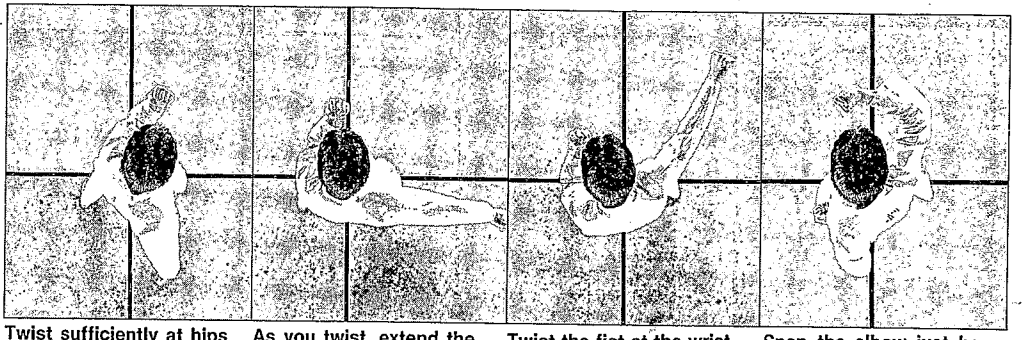
Roundhouse punch

With the roundhouse punch, maintain a guard in front of your face with one hand, while swinging the striking hand diagonally upwards from behind you. The turn in the arm comes from the spring in the elbow; be sure to use the snap of the wrist as you strike. Take care not to let your body sway from side to side.

The roundhouse punch is used as a counter after deflecting a punch with the hand. It is also the movement you use when you are throwing someone backwards (you would normally use the heel of the palm for this). The action is also the same for the upper and the hook.



Pull back the striking arm sufficiently before you swing. Follow through at forehead height, the fist stopping about two fist's width away from your temple.



Twist sufficiently at hips and shoulders to build up tension.

As you twist, extend the arm, swinging it wide.

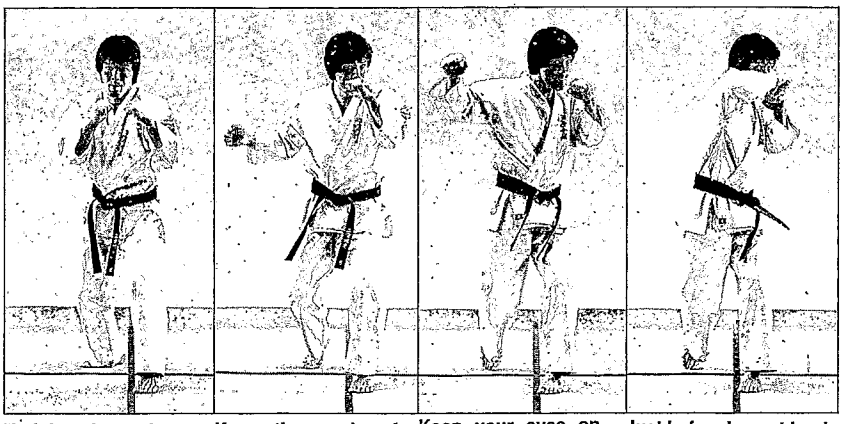
Twist the fist at the wrist to increase velocity.

Snap the elbow just before impact.

USE IN A REAL FIGHT

Upper long hook

The upper long hook is one practical application of the punch. The twist at the hips and shoulders is the same, but this time don't extend your arm; keep the elbow bent at the same angle throughout the movement. It is used in an actual fight as part of a combination to "stamp down" your opponent after you have already unbalanced him. It is also often used to hook the opponent as you step back with your rear leg to deflect his attack. Increase the speed of the punch through a sharp twist in the hips.



Training for a long upper cross from fighting stance.

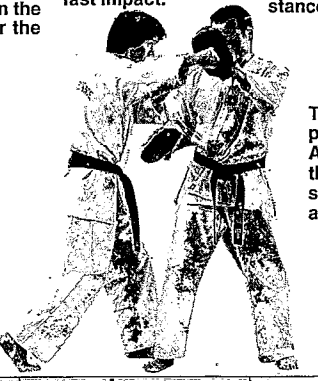
Keep the angle of your elbow constant, pull back your arm and then swing in the same way as for the roundhouse.

Keep your eyes on your opponent, twist at the right knee for a fast impact.

Just before impact hook through your opponent. Be careful not to let your stance get too high.

Up-down movement of the backward throw

The movement of the roundhouse punch can also be used as the up-down movement of the backward throw when you are stuck close to your opponent. Catch him under the chin with the heel of your hand, pushing upwards to force him to lean back, then as you step back and round, push him down. The "sticking" distance is that from which you can touch your opponent with the tip of a handsword when standing in fighting stance with lead arm bent. (Backward throw ⇨ p. 132)



Training with a punching mitt. Alter the height of the mitt to simulate striking chin, cheek and temple.

Catch your opponent under the chin with the heel of your hand.

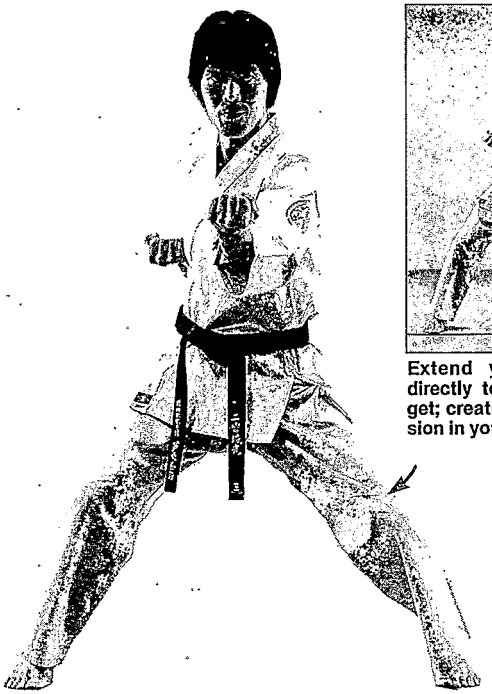
Close in, grabbing with your right hand while pushing his chin up.

Turn by drawing your foot back and drop him.

Keeping hold of your opponent's sleeve in practice prevents him banging the back of his head on the floor, which is dangerous.

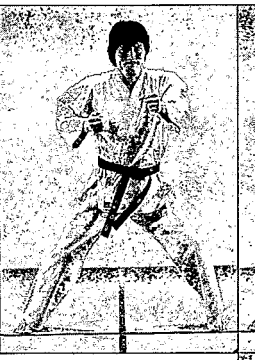
Naturally, you can also use the roundhouse in its original form.

CLOSE PUNCH

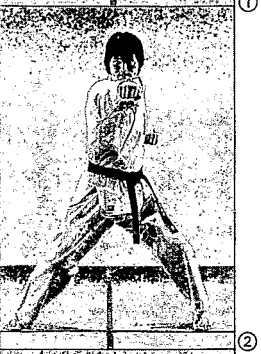


Start from the finish position of a left uppercut from a horseback stance. Twist the knee on the side of the punching hand inwards about 3cm.

Extend your left arm directly towards the target; create sufficient tension in your right arm.



As you pull back your left arm, punch straight with the right. Keep your arm close to your side, twisting inward at the right knee.



① Don't let your knee point outwards and don't let your stance become too high.

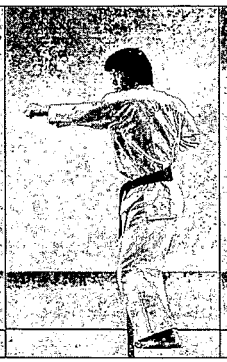
② Extend your right hand towards the target and continue with your next punch.

③ Don't let your upper body move from side to side. Using the twist in your hips push upwards.

Close punch—the basics for uppercut-and cross-uppercut

Practice this punch with short range in mind. The sharpness of the punch relies upon the pull-back of the arm, the closeness of the elbow to the side and the twist of the upper body. Pull back the arm to create tension, release the punch with a twist of the legs and the waist and with spring. Lead with the elbow and punch to short range. Don't overextend your arm.

Keep your knees flexible, maximizing spring.



Measure the distance by extending your arm; make sure you pull it back sufficiently.

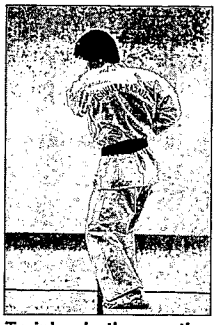
Never extend your arm at impact. Be sure you are leaning forward slightly.

Following impact, pull back from the elbow to follow through.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE CLOSE PUNCH

Basic practice

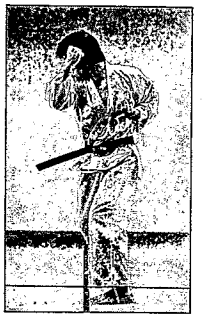
This punch can be used in a real fight either as an uppercut or as a body hook. While you can increase velocity in a fight by stepping in, during basic practice you should avoid this, and instead generate speed through a twist in the hips. It's for this reason that I recommend you practice the uppercut and cross-uppercut from the horseback stance in basic practice (keeping the angle of the elbow fixed).



Training in the practical uppercut.

Middle range uppercut. Push upwards.

Infighting uppercut. Sharpen it with waist and knee twist.



Cross-uppercut. Punch sharply and diagonally upwards.

Punch straight up under your opponent's chin.

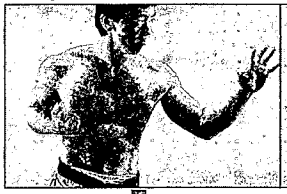
The cross-uppercut, from a diagonal upward motion.

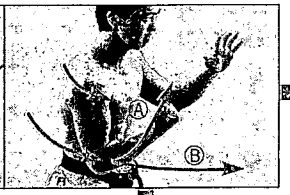
Left cross-uppercut.

Use of the elbow in the uppercut and body hook

Change the direction of the power generated by the spring in the ankles and knees and the twist in the waist and shoulders by changing the elbow angle and add extra power through the spring in the elbow. These changes in the angle and direction of the elbow make a great variety of punches possible; straights; hooks; uppercuts and cross-uppercuts. The photos on the right show this clearly, but remember that the direction of power changes according to distance and your opponent's position.

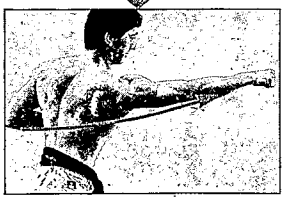
The moment before punching: create sufficient tension before quickly striking.



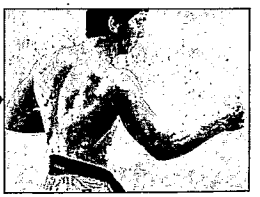


Directing energy with the lead of the elbow, strike up.

A shows an uppercut retaining the angle in the arm.
B shows a hook with the elbow opened up.

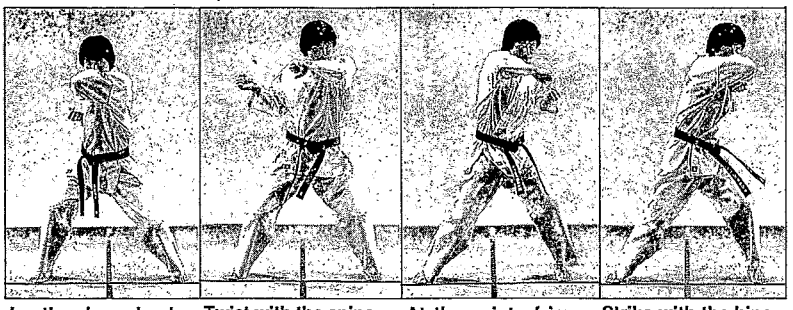


A straight punch, the elbow exploding open.



Use the opening of the elbow for a penetrating strike into the body.

ELBOW STRIKE



In the horseback stance, start from the finishing point of a left elbow strike.

Twist with the spine as pivot, 'bouncing' out your elbow.

At the point of impact, pull your fist into your body.

Strike with the hips turning all the way to the follow-through.

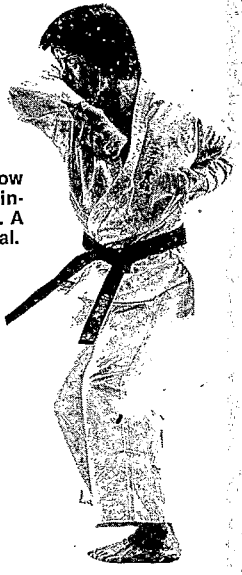
Elbow strike

The elbow strike differs from the other punches covered in that the distance from the center of the body (pivot) and the "head" of the striking weapon (the elbow) is very short. Because of this, the twist in the hips and shoulders becomes even more vital to increase velocity. The fact is that the speed of the twist in the hips and the upper body becomes the speed of the technique itself. The elbow and knee strikes, being close to the pivotal center, are potentially very powerful weapons. So, if you can master the sharp twist and maximize your speed, you will have a very useful and destructive technique to add to your arsenal—one anyone can learn.

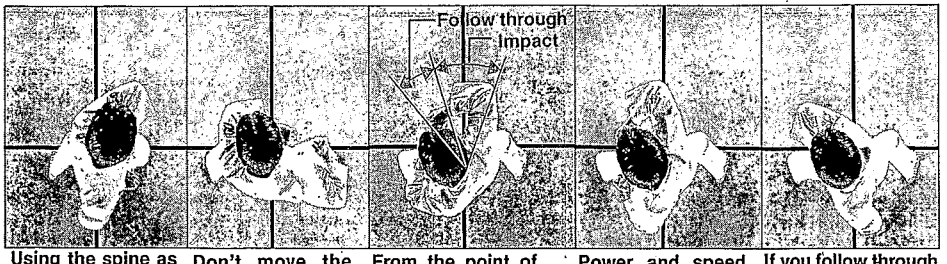
However much you try to up the speed of the technique, you will be wasting your time if you only use the movement from shoulder to elbow and neglect the twist in the hips. Mastering a good, clean twist at the hips is the short cut to progress. To do this, the most important factor is flexibility in the lower body. Unless the lower half of your body is supple, you will never be able to rotate the upper body smoothly.

From the horseback stance, use the spring in your knees, build up tension and kick the floor, and, at the same time, swing your upper body through a 75°-90° arc. Keep your shoulders loose and shoot your forearm out from your side, right across to the end of the arc. Always lead with the hips and at the point of impact pull your fist round tight into the body, striking the target hard with your elbow. Control weight and distance through the twist in shoulders and hips, and maintain a slightly forward-leaning posture.

Impact zone is shoulder width. Pull back fast. For basic practice train at chin level.



Practice the elbow strike with in-fighting in mind. A sharp twist is vital.



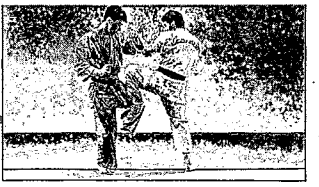
Using the spine as pivot, strike with a sharp twist of your body.

Don't move the pivot as you increase velocity.

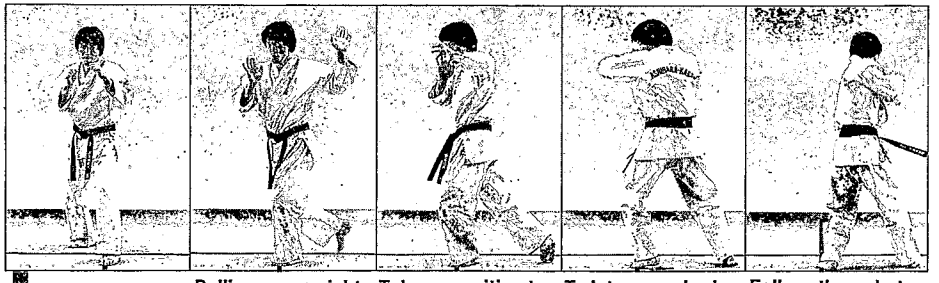
From the point of impact, pull your fist in tightly.

Power and speed should be concentrated at the moment of impact.

If you follow through too far, you'll break your own balance.



• Roundhouse elbow strike



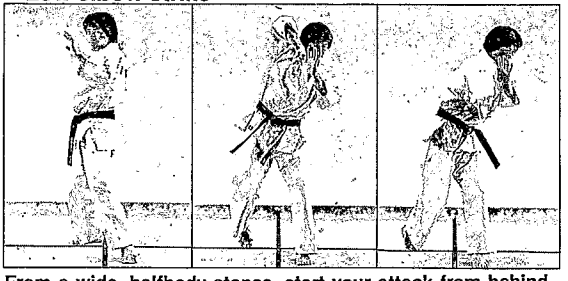
Pulling your right

Take up position to your opponent's side.

Twist your body, striking through the horizontally.

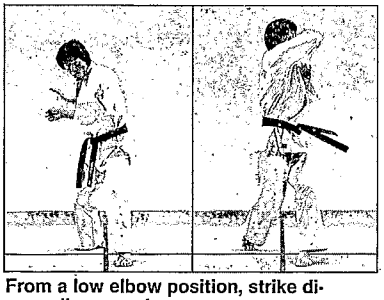
Follow through to floor him with a winding.

• Low elbow strike



From a wide, halfbody stance, start your attack from behind where your opponent can't see it, dropping downwards.

• High elbow strike



From a low elbow position, strike diagonally upwards.

Train with a punching mitt to get used to the feel of each strike.

• Back spinning elbow strike

Depending on your opponent's position, bring your back foot around at least 180°, and spin, putting momentum behind your elbow and striking in the opposite direction to the normal elbow strike. Increase velocity through the speed of the turn on your foot.

If he stops your elbow, switch to a handsword and strike through.

Even if he tries to strike you in the ribs, he won't match the speed of your hand-sword.

Use in a real fight

The elbow strike can be used in three ways in a fight: as a roundhouse, as an upward strike or as a downward blow. As you train, imagine the positions you and your opponent may find yourselves in; also practice striking from the side after you have destroyed his balance. From the side position, open your chest as if drawing a bow and then strike in.

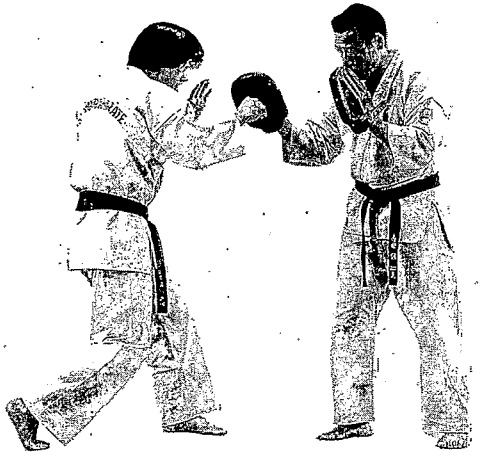
A combination of punch followed by elbow strike can be used in most situations. In a real fight, you can often break up your opponent's balance, grab him and hit him with an elbow strike. You can also use the elbow strike in combination with a kick from the back leg, thus putting all your weight behind the strike.

In a real fight, link elbow strikes with punches.

HOOK AND UPPERCUT

If you master the basics successfully you give yourself a formidable range of punches to choose from: the long hook (the practical application of the roundhouse), the upper and the body hook based on the upper, and the in-fighting hook and upper based on the elbow strike. In a real fight, depending on how the fight is going, each punch can be used in a variety of ways, as a full-blooded punch, as a linking technique or as a feint. Train with basics and applications so that you can use all these variations.

Training to hook from the fighting stance. As with the elbow strike, keep the circle tight. As you step forward, shift your weight behind the punch. At impact, make sure your knuckles strike the target accurately. As you follow through, build tension in the retracted hand, ready to follow up with your next punch from the swing of your body.



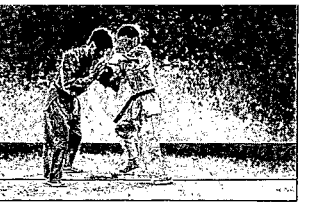
Concentrate the energy from twist at the knees and hips, and the push from your right leg, into your fist. Make sure your knuckles strike accurately.

Hook

The use of the elbow in the hook is the same as for the elbow strike. Change the angle of your elbow according to the range, and strike your opponent as though winding into him. Transmit the power of your body twist centered on the spine into the circle drawn by your elbow to strike through your opponent. You can use the hook in various ways: long hook, short hook, upper hook, dropping hook...

Hooks and uppers are based on the twisting motion of the body, and can be used as a reaction strike. In other words, utilize the twisting motion of your body as you pull back your first punch to facilitate a follow-up strike with these punches.

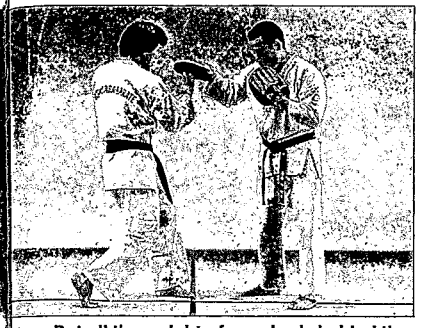
Combination of a right hook and a left uppercut. Use the fol-



Uppercut

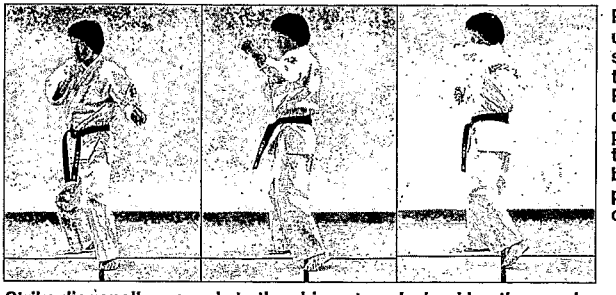
The uppercut can be divided into several categories: a strike directly upwards slipping through your opponent's guard to strike him right under the chin or into the body; an uppercut like a hook from diagonally below; a cross uppercut from the outside, slipping under your opponent's guard between his arm and body. Don't just punch with your upper body, strike upwards from a low stance, driving up with the legs as if stamping the floor, using maximum spin and twist from the ankles and knees. Develop the ability to shift quickly from a straight to a hook or an uppercut from the basic stance.

An uppercut from the fighting stance. Lower your shoulders and center of gravity; as you shift your weight forward. ...punch upwards, using the spring in your legs and hips. Same for the cross uppercut, imagining your opponent.



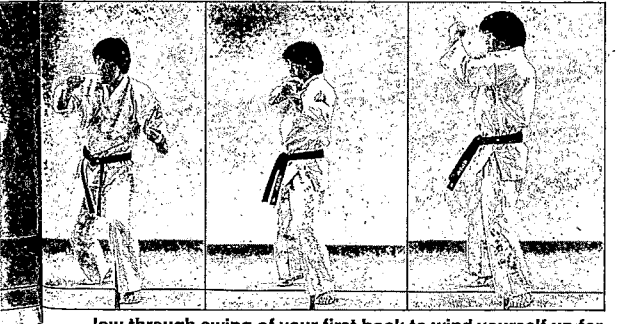
Put all the weight of your body behind the punch by moving forward and upward, using the spring in your knees and hips. Train changing the height and angle of the mitt to vary the punches.

⊙ Cross uppercut



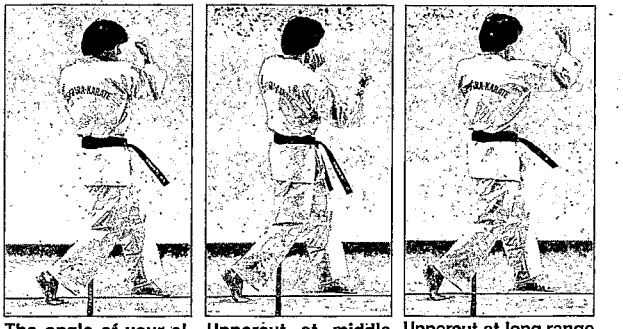
Punch diagonally upwards, making sufficient use of twist in the hips. Punch from the outside of your opponent's punch, between his arm and body, using the uppercut as a counter.

Strike diagonally upwards to the chin or temple, hooking the punch.



low through swing of your first hook to wind yourself up for the left upper punch.

⊙ Range for the uppercut



The angle of your elbow depends on the distance to your opponent. This photo shows short range.

Uppercut at middle range. Change angle and height of impact according to your opponent's stance.

Uppercut at long range. As you shift your center of gravity forward, control distance through the spring in your knees.

PUNCH COMBINATIONS

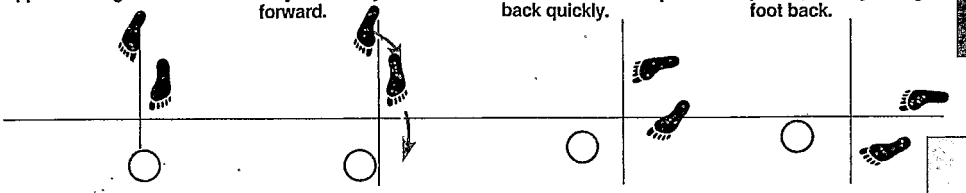
Assume position 1 to your opponent's right side.

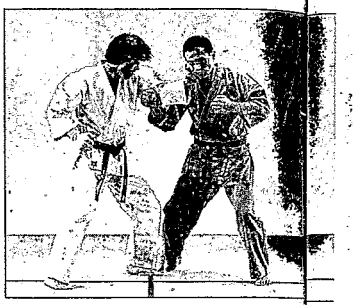
Punch with a straight left as you move your left foot forward.

As you step, punch using the twist in the hips. Pull back quickly.

As you pull back the punch, draw your right foot back.

Hit him with a left hook as you step forward with your left leg.





Combinations on the move

Once you have mastered the basic punches from the fighting stance, the next thing to master is practical application, which involves mixing punch combinations with stepwork. Power and speed in combinations are produced by striking in a good rhythm.

Train using a variety of tempos—1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2-3 and so on. Combine your stepwork, practicing punching before you step, as you step and after you step from all positions. Be sure not to fall into a fixed pattern!

• Creating tension in combinations

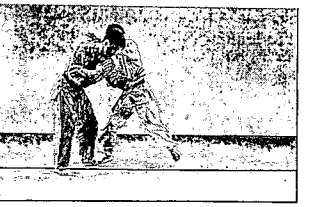
Combination from a left hook.

Punch with a left hook as you step in with your left leg.

Position yourself quickly and hit him with a straight right.

Draw back your right hand and hit him with a left uppercut.

Watch for upward and downward movement of your center of gravity.



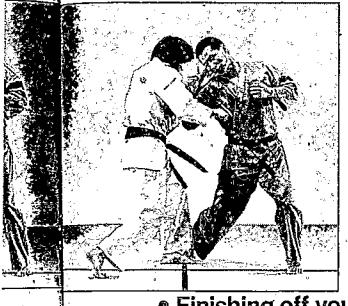
Using the swing back from the left hook, hit him with a right.

Use a right short uppercut then break him down with another left (a short hook).

Use the swing from your left short hook to create tension for your next punch.

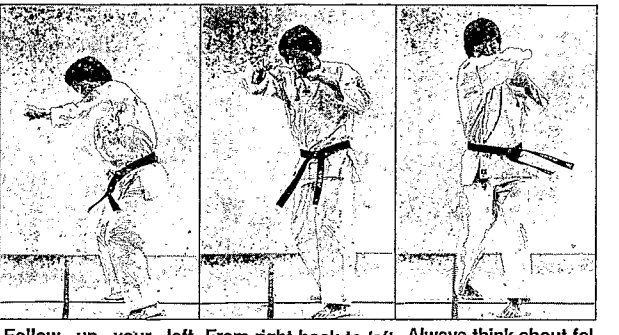
Twist in for a right cross uppercut.

Don't sacrifice form as you carry out the combinations.



• Feints

When you don't have enough tension for a punch, you can turn it into a feint. For example, throw a feint at his cheek, chin, shoulder or upper arm and, at the same time, punch him in the body (or face). Your opponent will direct all his power and concentration to the point he thinks is being targeted, leaving his other side open for your attack.

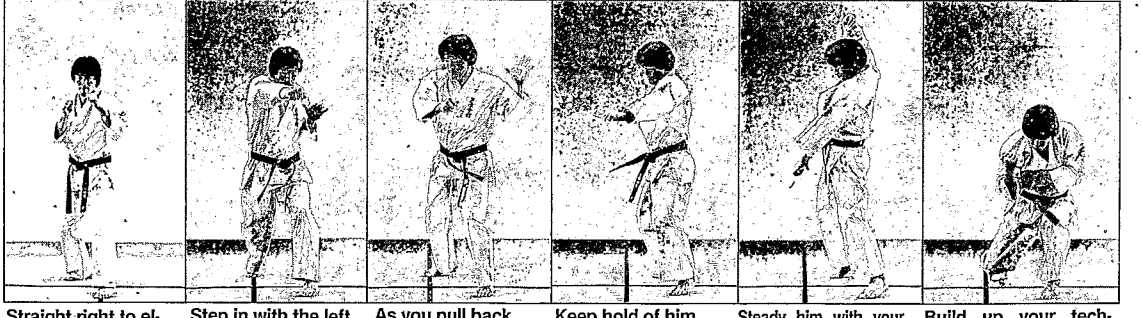


Follow up your left straight with a right hook.

From right hook to left hook in 1-2 or even 1-2-3 combination.

Always think about following up with straights, elbow strikes or hooks.

• Finishing off your opponent as he falls



Straight right to elbow strike...

Step in with the left leg, hit him with a straight right.

As you pull back your punch, grip your opponent with your left hand.

Keep hold of him and pull him into you.

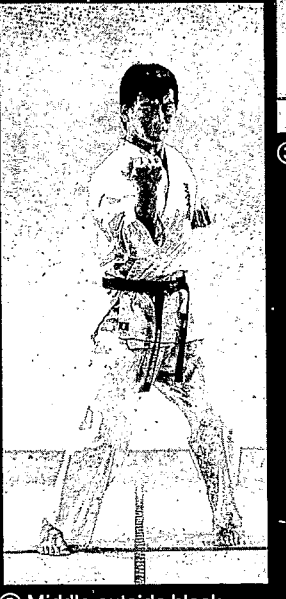
Steady him with your left hand as you drop on him with an elbow strike from directly above.

Build up your technique combinations imagining the moves an opponent might make.

BLOCKS

Practice order for basics

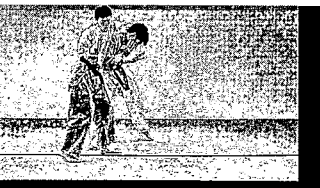
① High block



② Middle outside block

③ Inside block

④



• Basic practice

Check your technique from the bottom up and from the point closest to your center of gravity.

A block becomes a block only when it comes into contact with your opponent's technique. When practicing blocks it is even more important to imagine your opponent's position, range and technique than it is with punches. This goes for both basic practice and fight training.

Blocks are practiced out of the pigeon-toe stance, but you assume a more side-on posture than for punches. First of all a block must stop your opponent's attack, and then, with the follow-through, break his balance. Imagine his attack as you practice and determine where the impact zone will be; block the attack and follow through with precision. Blocks in particular lose all their strength if your elbow drifts away from your body. Think first about blocking with your hips, twisting effectively, leading with your elbow to impact.

Always keep your follow up in mind as you practice blocks. It is clear that if you only block, you'll be felled sooner or later. You must simultaneously block and prepare yourself to counterattack. To that end, when you block during basic practice, you should bring your upper body side on to your opponent, pulling back your other hand to build tension for the counterattack. When practicing an inside block, with lower block and roundhouse block, which involves moving both hands at once, concentrate on smooth, definite movements for each hand to avoid sacrificing form.

④ Low parry

⑤ Inside block and low parry

⑥ Roundhouse block

Be sure that:
- you are twisting inwards with the knee corresponding to the blocking hand
- the opposite knee doesn't point outwards.
- your ribs aren't exposed.
- your upper body is turning side on.
- you are blocking with your hips.
- your shoulders are relaxed.
- you're not sticking your chin out.
- you don't let your stance get too high.
- you are concentrating power at the point of impact.
- you're not pulling your hips back.
- you're leaning forward slightly.
- your pivot is solid.

Remember: learn the right block for each attack.

HIGH BLOCK

Start from the finishing position of a left high block.

Drop your elbow, with your fist as the pivot point.

Cross your arms as tightly as possible in front of your chest.

Block with the right as you draw the left hand back, keeping it tight in to your body.

At the point of impact, extend your elbow slightly as you block.

High Block

The high block is used against high punches and kicks such as the upper and back roundhouse kicks. When blocking a kick/impact don't block at the moment of kick/impact, and either before or after the follow-through.

Starting in the pigeon-toe stance, cross your hands in front of your face, then lower them to the level of your solar plexus. As you do this your elbows should come down close to your ribs. (These movements are designed to guarantee a constant guard for your face and body). From the ready position, push the blocking hand diagonally upwards. Lead with the elbow, but don't let it drift too far out to the side. Just before impact, extend your elbow, blocking with the spring in the elbow and side. You should finish with your wrist level with your forehead, about three fists' width away. Block along the length of the forearm between the wrist and elbow. The other arm is drawn down across the face to protect it. Both elbows are drawn together in front of the chest where hands cross. Don't stop them here, but continue in one smooth motion. When practicing, don't worry too much about how far you follow through, concentrate rather on the moment of impact. Main points: twist in the hips, make sure you're leaning slightly forward and your upper body turns side on to your opponent.

Impact in the block

A block has a moment of impact in just the same way as a kick or a punch. The aim of impact with a kick or a punch is to damage your opponent, break his balance and/or knock him over with your follow-through. In the case of a block, the impact zone is that area within which you stop, deflect or turn around your opponent's attack. The aim of the high block is to stop your opponent's follow-through.

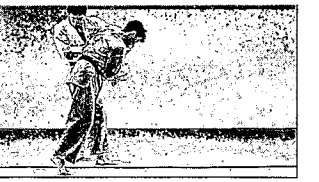
Thrust upwards from chin level, extending your elbow.

As your arm shoots upwards, turn the wrist. Your upper body should be side on as you repel his attack.

Follow-through continues on to either height A or B.

The upper body comes into an even more side position than for a punch. Block down the center line of your body. The knee corresponding to the blocking hand should twist inwards 4-5cm.

Make sure you are leaning slightly forward. If you lean back you will only be pushed over by your opponent. Follow through to a point where your wrist is three fists' distance from your own frehead.

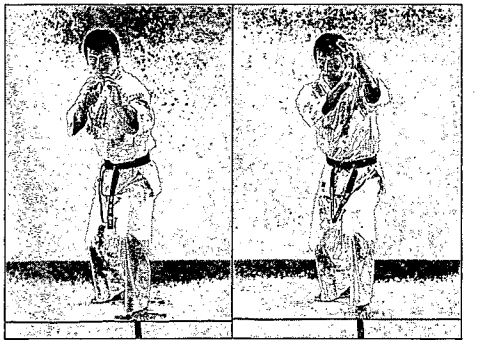


USE IN A REAL FIGHT

High block in a real fight.

Blocking with a left handsword, guard your face with your right.

Block upwards and step in simultaneously.

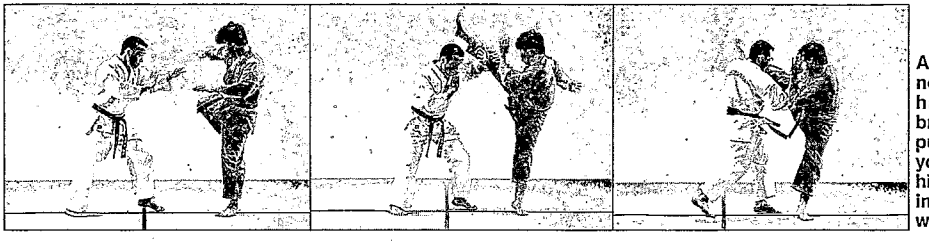


From fighting stance turn your left hand outwards to block; in a real situation you will be using step work as well.

Handsword block

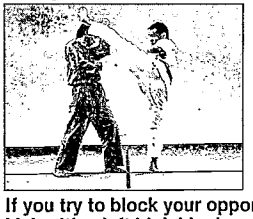
There are, of course, occasions in a real fight when you will block with your fist, but, in general, the handsword is much more widely used. This goes for all blocks, because in a real fight the follow-up grab or punch and so on can be made far more smoothly with the fingers open. It is also important to remember that a tightly clenched fist will cause you to tense up, robbing your technique of speed. In a fight, the key is not to constantly maintain tension, rather you must be able to switch rhythmically at split second intervals between tension and relaxation, from handsword to lightly clenched fist to tightly clenched fist. Don't keep your fist clenched hard, but use your hand with flexibility; use the handsword to draw your opponent in, then break his balance. When you block with a handsword, it is actually the wrist which does the blocking. In the case of the high block, flip your hand around after blocking with a handsword to hold your opponent's striking arm or leg and pull him in to destroy his balance.

In a real fight you will deflect the follow-through of his kick with a handsword, switching his direction and thus breaking his balance.



As you block your opponent's high kick with a left handsword, push him, breaking his balance and punch to the body. Start your technique the moment his kick touches your blocking hand and your counter will finish him off.

• High block—common mistakes



If you try to block your opponent's left high kick with a left high block you've had it.

A high block with the face left wide open. If your opponent continues with a succession of punches you will end up with his fist in your mouth.

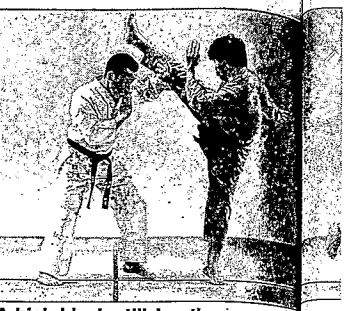
A high cross block leaves your body and chin wide open. A real fight is never ended by a single block.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES From High

• High block to low kick

Control techniques with the basic high block—as your opponent launches a high kick, judge where the point of impact is going to be from the build up of tension, step in quickly and block just before impact, breaking his balance. Simultaneously punch or, before his kicking leg returns to the ground, kick at his highly vulnerable pivot leg. You can also kick the kicking leg itself just before it lands. Take advantage of the riskiness of high kicks.

A typical low kick combination from a high block countering an opponent's high kick.

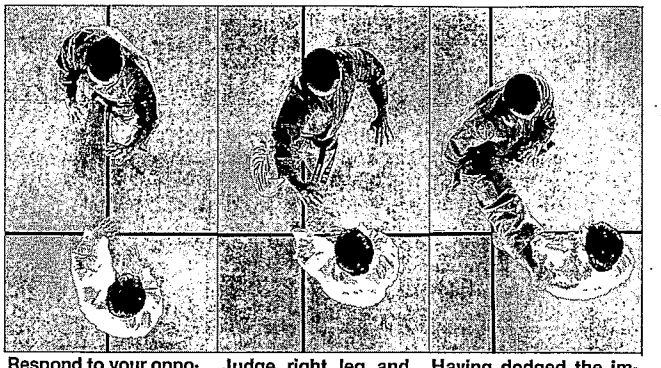


A high block utilizing the step-in.

High block and footwork

If you combine your high block (using a handsword in a real fight) with foot work, you will be able to block powerfully and safely without having to open up your ribs. By stepping you can shift the point of impact of your opponent's attack. Take a step back from the incoming kick to absorb the impact, block his follow-through, which will have little power, and fell him with a kick.

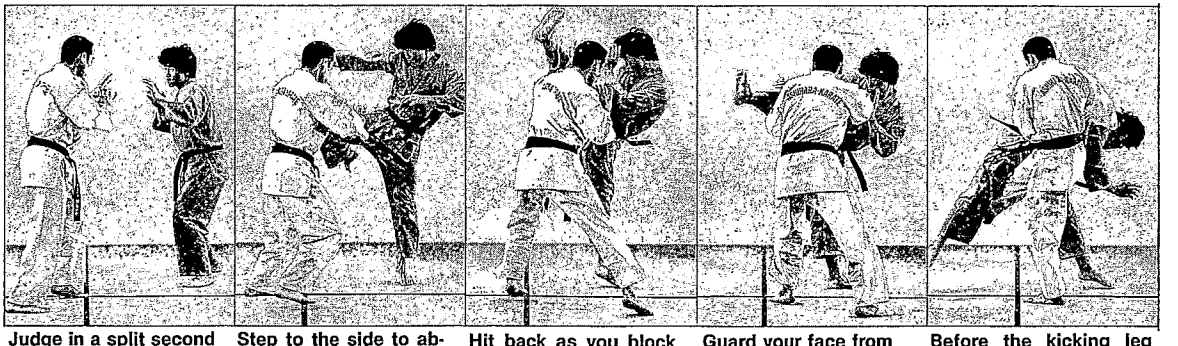
You can also step in, blocking your opponent's kick before it really has time to gain speed and power, while breaking his balance in the process. Follow up with a counter.



Respond to your opponent's right kick with a step to absorb the impact and a high block.

Judge right leg and step to the side.

Having dodged the impact of the kick, block and break your opponent's balance.



Judge in a split second whether his attack is to be from left or right.

Step to the side to absorb the impact of the right high kick.

Hit back as you block with a left high block.

Guard your face from a right punch with your left hand. Push (punch) your opponent over with your right.

Before the kicking leg lands, aim a low kick at it.

Block

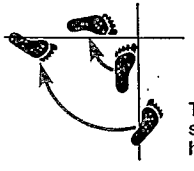
Stepping in very quickly, break your opponent's balance with the blocking hand.

Before his kicking leg lands, aim a low kick at his unstable pivot leg.

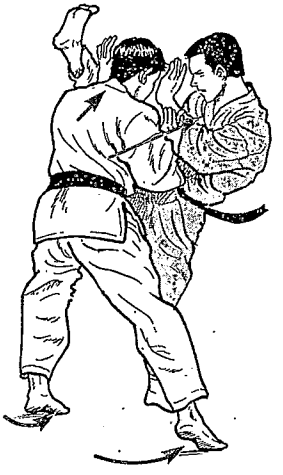
The pivot leg is exceptionally vulnerable until the kicking leg lands. Target that weakness.

Stepping to absorb the attack

By stepping in the direction of the opponent's roundhouse kick, you'll eigher make it useless or substantially weakened. Combine this step with the high block, and you have a safe and effective method of wrecking your opponent's balance. Watch out for the speed and extension of the kick. The length of the kick is governed by the twist of the pivot leg and the adjustment of the hip joint. Use this knowledge to learn to judge the speed and timing of a roundhouse kick and make your step lightning fast to avoid it.



The step for absorbing a left high kick



Step in and block high

Step sharply around and in as the kick comes in. As you block, strike into the opponent's body to fell him. If you just push your opponent's leg back, allowing it to return to it's original position, you will have little effect on his balance, and will soon be on the receiving end of another kick.

The step in response to a left high kick.

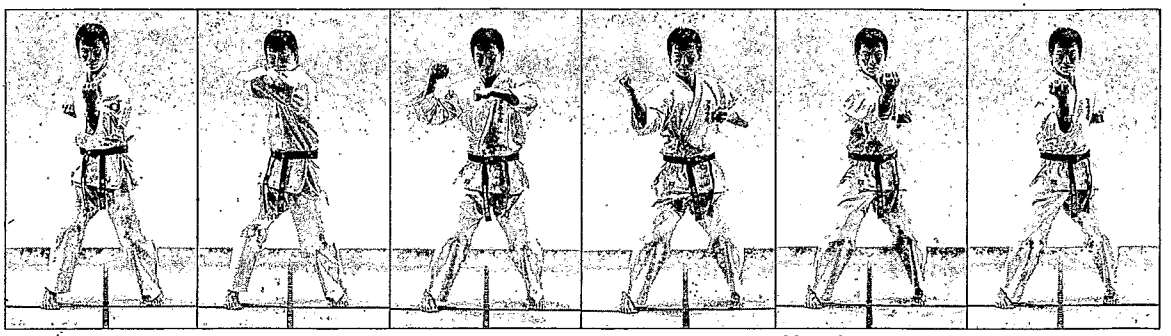
Keeping your eyes on his advancing right leg, you judge it to be a left kick.

As the kick starts, judge exactly what kind it is.

If you step far enough out of the way, you don't even need to block.

Having deflected his kick, follow up with the correct counter.

MIDDLE/HIGH OUTSIDE BLOCK



Start from the finishing point of a left middle outside block.

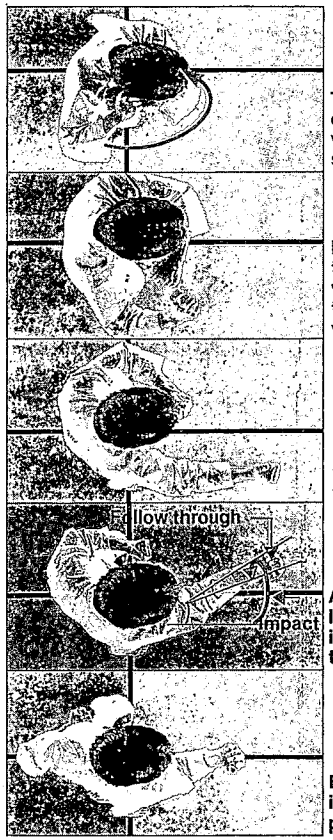
Draw both hands back until they are just behind your ear.

Swing your right hand outwards slightly wider than shoulder width, and then inwards.

Lead with your elbows as you take on your opponent's attack.

After impact continue to swing, pulling your arm in.

Follow through at shoulder height and do a left block.



The block starts outside shoulder width and then swings inwards.

Impact is from the moment the wrist comes within shoulder width.

Block your opponent's hand or leg from the outside to draw it in.

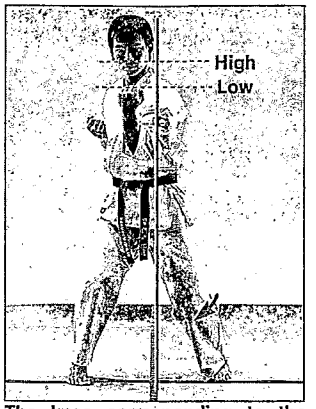
After impact follow through, pulling your arm in tighter.

Bring your elbow in to a center line position to finish.

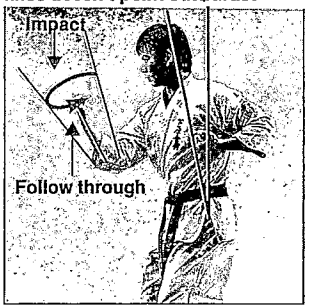
Middle/High Outside Block

Make sure you pull in your chin a little! This goes for all techniques, but especially the outside block. Swing the blocking hand out to the side, leading with your elbow, then block inwards. Bring your fist and wrist around in a wide circle to draw your opponent's attacking hand into you. For the middle outside block, your fist should be at shoulder level; for the high outside block it needs to be 4–5cm higher.

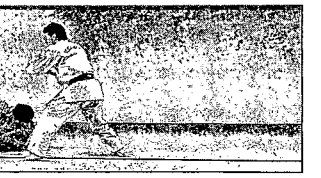
Lead the swing with your elbow, keeping the circle drawn by your elbow smaller than that drawn by your hand: something similar in shape to a bucket. Don't bend your arm too little or too much. Turn the arm at the angle that will strike your opponent's arm or leg with the largest area possible. Don't swing it too wide of the body, but at the same time don't make the circle too tight. Look carefully at the pictures and learn the technique correctly.



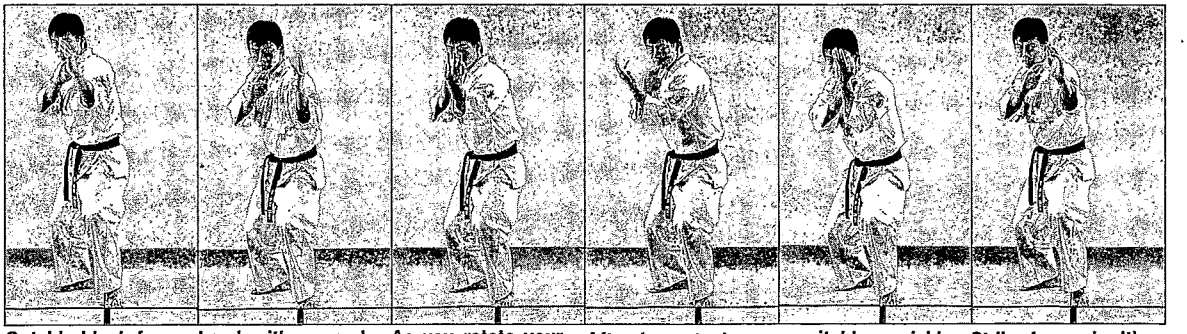
The knee corresponding to the blocking hand should twist inwards 5-6cm. Make sure the opposite knee doesn't point outwards!



When blocking, it is important to maintain a slightly forward-leaning posture. Don't let your elbow move too far away from your body!



USE IN A REAL FIGHT



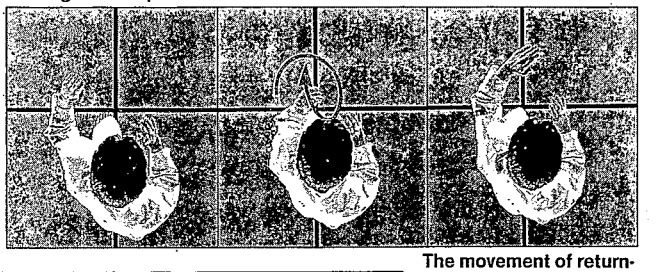
Outside block from fighting stance. Lead with your elbow from the outside; rotate gently to describe a circle. As you rotate your forearm, turn your wrist, drawing in and blocking. After impact, draw your arm in and return it... ...switching quickly to a handsword. Strike forward with your handsword, returning it to its original position.

Block with your leading hand

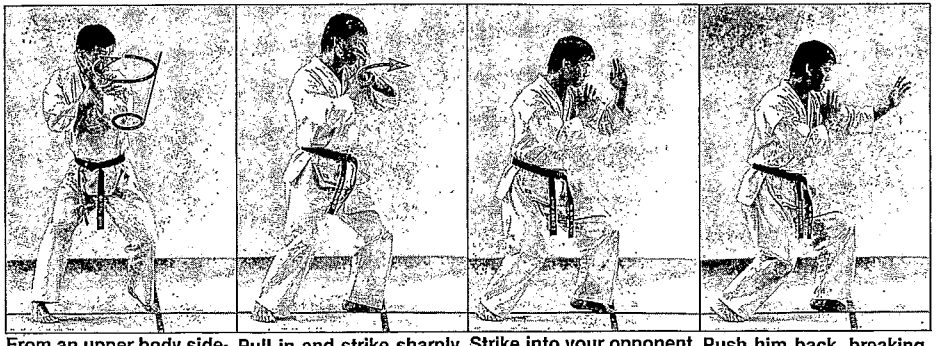
In a real fight, when fighting orthodox style, the outside block is used with the left hand to block your opponent's right punches and right front kick above waist level. If you try to block his left punch or left front kick, you'll end up square on to him, losing your advantage. Moreover, if you try to use the outside block with your right hand as in orthodox style, you will again leave yourself in a dangerous face-to-face situation: use your right hand when you are in the southpaw stance. In other words, you must block with the leading hand for whatever stance you are in. As a result of stepping in during the course of a fight, you're bound to end up in southpaw stance sooner or later, so make sure you also practice out of southpaw (by dropping the kicking leg of a right front kick in front, you are placing yourself in southpaw stance).

Linking techniques

A block isn't any good on its own, it must be used as the basis for attack. As you block with your hands, take up an offensive position through footwork, then counterattack. However, if your block doesn't have much effect in breaking your opponent's balance, devise a way by which you can break it further using a linking technique.



The movement of returning your hand to its original position as a handsword is a *linking* movement designed to futher destroy your opponent's balance. You achieve this by pushing down on your opponent's technique after having first deflected it. If you can, punch with the hand that has just blocked.

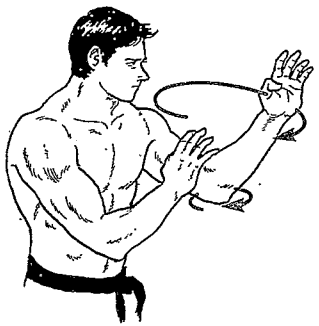


From an upper body side-on posture, trace the 'bucket' shape. Pull in and strike sharply out with a handsword. Strike into your opponent as if to knock him backwards. Push him back, breaking his balance. At this point you could also pull him in to you.

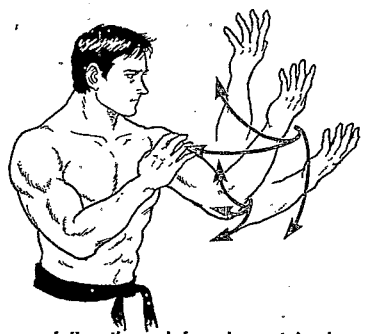
OUTSIDE BLOCK—USE IN A REAL FIGHT

The three variations

In a fight, a variety of attack patterns can be employed, depending on power, speed and technique. So, it's pretty obvious that a variety of defense patterns will be necessary. In the previous volume, I explained how to move from an outside block to kicks, punches and throws depending on the extent to which the outside block succeeded in destroying your opponent's balance. Here, however, I will demonstrate how to defend against your opponent's techniques, in particular punches, by breaking his balance in three directions: along the horizontal, as well as in an upward and in a downward direction.



Move in the same way for all three techniques up to the moment of impact, then change the direction of power.

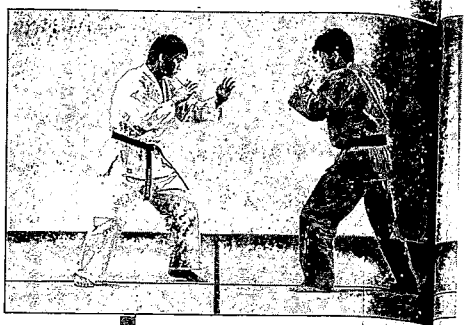


As you follow through from impact, lead with the elbow, destroying your opponent's balance to greater effect by turning your forearm upwards, downwards or horizontally. From the start, be careful not to overdo the movements.

Through basic practice, learn how to break down your opponent's attack with the outside block, leading with your elbow and swinging your arm through a horizontal plain. From this basis, vary the block diagonally upwards or diagonally downwards—in this way you can break your opponent's blance even more effectively, placing yourself in a safe position from which to counter.

Be sure to master the slight difference in the amount of power used in the three different types of outer block, and you will be able to control the fighting parry more easily and widen the variety of your attacks. Think about it: if you knock his attack upwards, you expose his body; if you knock it down, you expose his face. In other words, a gap will apear in his defenses in the opposite direction to that in which you have deflected his attack. There is a massive diffence between knowing this and calculating your attacks accordingly, and ploughing into your opponent without thinking in the hope that you might catch him with a chance blow. It is vital to hone your instinct till you can attack any gap that appears without a moment's thought. Remember, though, it is no less important to have an understanding beforehand of what openings will be ceated by what defenses; attack logically and force your opponent to open up the gaps. As soon as if you find a hole in his defense, strike! Create a gap and strike! These two points are the basis of Ashihara karate fight control.

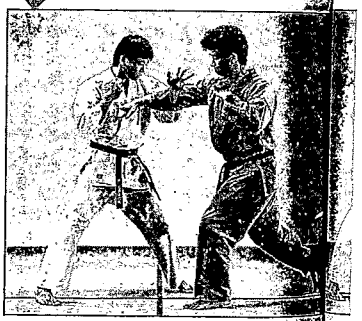
When deflecting your opponent's blow downwards, if you bend the three fingers from your little finger to your middle finger, you can catch his jacket, making linking techniques (pushing and pulling) easier.



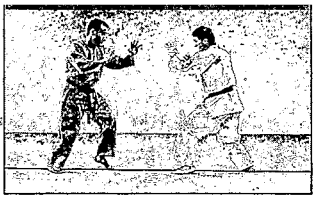
Deflect your opponent's punch to the side using a basic outside block. You can either block to repel his technique or alternatively to draw him in. Turn your opponent from the outside inwards.

When your opponent punches towards your face, knock his arm diagonally upwards with the outside block. By knocking his hand up, you'll obstruct his field of vision and give yourself the chance to attack him with virtually any technique.

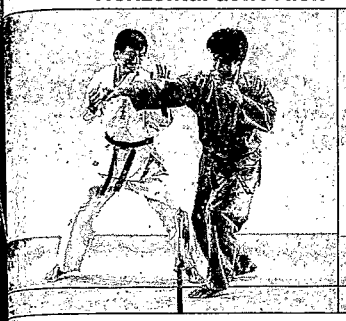
Deflect your opponent's downward pointing middle punch diagonally down from the outside inwards, You can either knock his arm away sharply or hold on to it or pull him towards you.



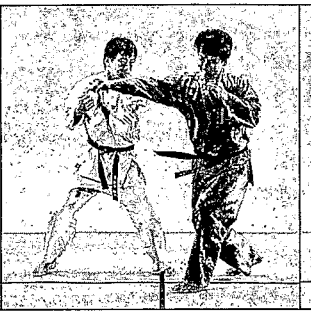
Sidestep his punch and push the punching arm downwards.



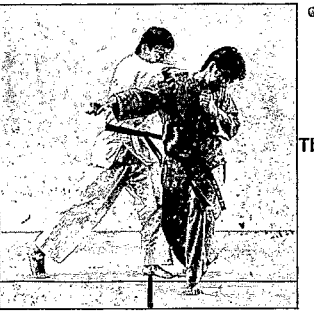
Horizontal deflection



Step to the outside, blocking simultaneously with a sharp outside block.

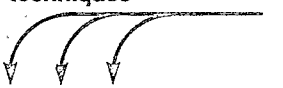


Knock his arm horizontally from the outside inwards, spinning him around and breaking his balance.



Punch to the face from the outside. If you don't break his balance sufficiently you may get kicked, so take care!

Outside block follow-up techniques



Throw Punch Kick

If you only hit your opponent's technique lightly when you're at long range, follow up with a kick. If you have drawn him in and he is unbalanced, punch. If you have grabbed him and are at very close range, throw him and follow up with a suitable technique.

Upward deflection

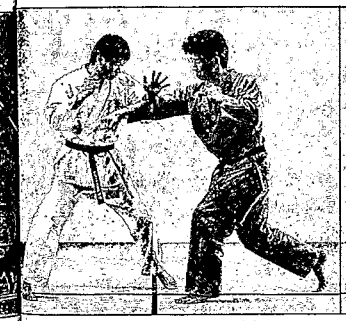
Deflect your opponent's right upper punch upwards in the direction it is travelling.

From the point of impact knock your opponent's arm away sharply, and his upper body will twist around.

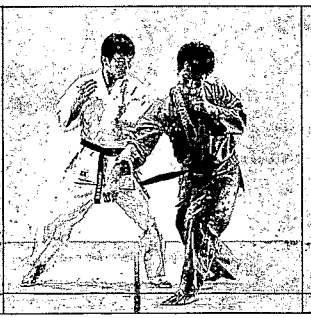
(His upper body will twist around.)

If you sink your fist right in between his ribs, you will do a lot of damage.

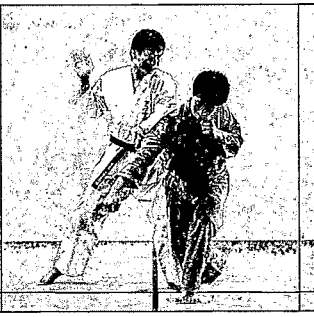
Downward deflection



As you step in with your front foot, deflect the attacking arm sharply down.



Hold on to the deflected arm and attack, giving him no chance to regain his balance.



From your position outside and above your opponent, strike downwards to the back of his head with an elbow strike.

From here, depending on how he goes down, you can follow up with a right roundhouse kick.

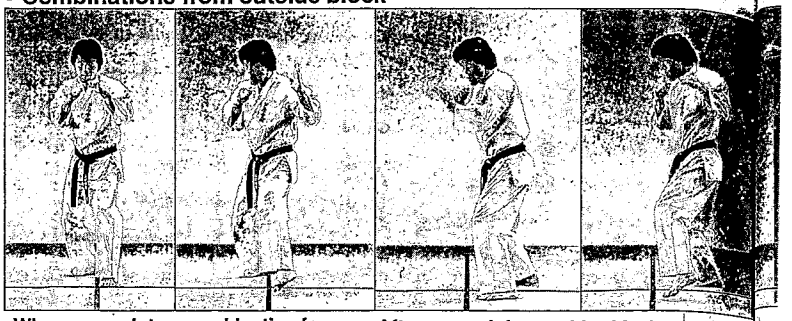
CONTROL TECHNIQUES From Outside

Break your opponent's balance with the right block

The basic principle of the outside block is to break the attack down from the outside inwards. While students often have a theoretical understanding of the principles of the technique, when they train I often see them still blocking left punches with left outside blocks, leaving themseves face-on to their opponents. Maybe they are scared by the thought that if they block correctly the punch will pass straight before their eyes. I don't doubt that beginners are especially prone to this fear. Just remember—if you step to the outside, and position yourself on the outside, you won't get hit.

Even if you manage to stop the first punch with a bad block, a second and third combination of powerful punches is going to come straight back at you. Getting punched in the face is painful, and you don't need to feel it to know it!

• Combinations from outside block



When you go into a combination from a block, always consider what your next move with the blocking hand is going to be—whether you are going to punch, hold, or pull with it—before adding a follow-up or bringing it back to guard your face. From that point, you can consider what to do with your other hand and your legs to increase the possibilities for variation.

After your left outside block, punch with a left-right combination as you step (1) into the outside [1] position.

• Outside block to kick combination

If you manage to break your opponent's balance sufficiently, any counterattack is possible. You also have to know what to do if your opponent has enough power left to attack you again. Aim at the biggest gap opened by your block and strike in with the most effective technique. In the case of the outside block to kick combination, use the right kick after taking into account the height of your target and the distance between you. You should also think about launching a series of strikes.

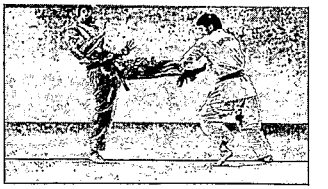
A right high kick to the face following an outside block which pushed your opponent's attack diagonally downwards. Step in as you block, building the necessary tension for your kick, then deliver the strike (high kicks ⇨ p. 108).

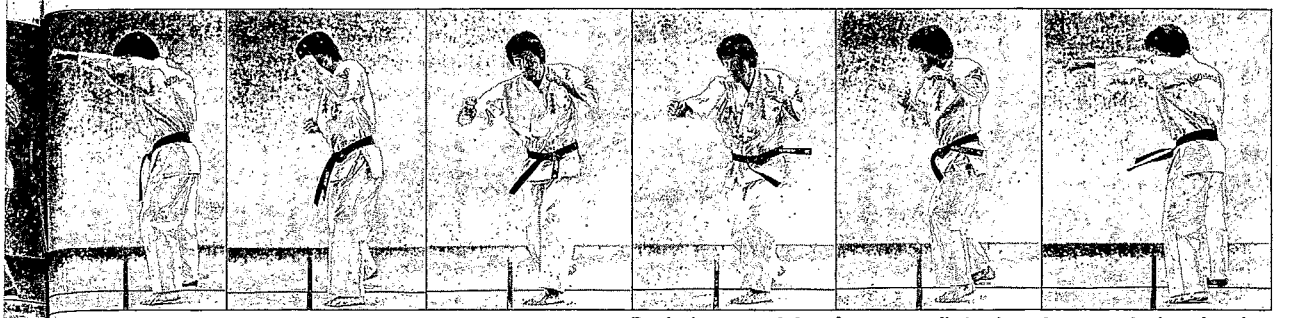
• Control techniques from an outside block in southpaw stance.

In the southpaw stance, block your opponent's left punch with a right hand outside block. The photos show how to block an opponent's left-right combination by moving in close and twisting the upper body. Beginners, however, should first learn how to instinctively dodge the attack by stepping back and then counterattacking correctly.

From southpaw stance, block your opponents left punch with a right outside block, his right punch with a left outside block. Keep your upper body stable.

Block





After you bring back the blocking arm, use it for a left punch.

As you punch with the left, wind up your right.

Punch to the body with your right. Divide your punches between upper and lower body.

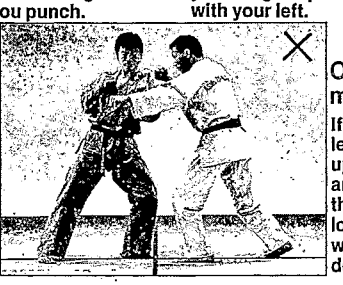
Don't let your left knee swing out as you punch.

As you pull back your right punch with your left.

As you train, imagine the points at which you would aim.

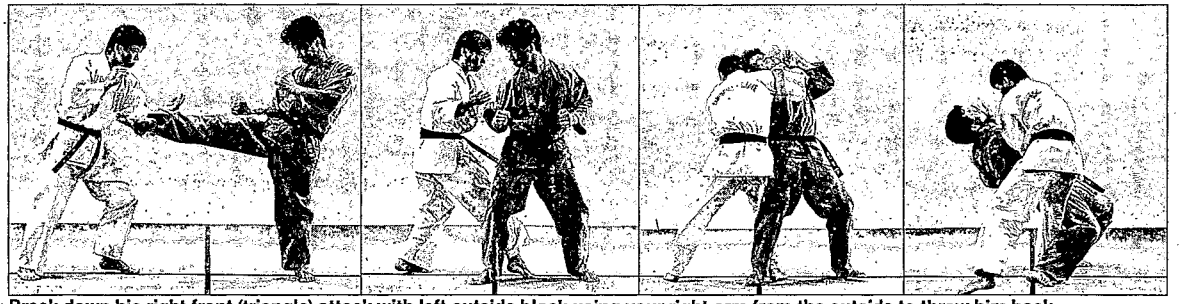
• Outside block to backward throw combination

After blocking, cross step with your right foot (line ②) to your opponent's outside, close in and throw him. Move your left foot along line ①) to get close and then your right foot along line ④ to pull your opponent back, twisting your body around as you throw him. If you're doing a left outside block, knock him back and down with your right hand; if it's a low block, use the blocking hand. (For back throw forward [winding] throw ⇨ p.132; low parry ⇨ p.78)

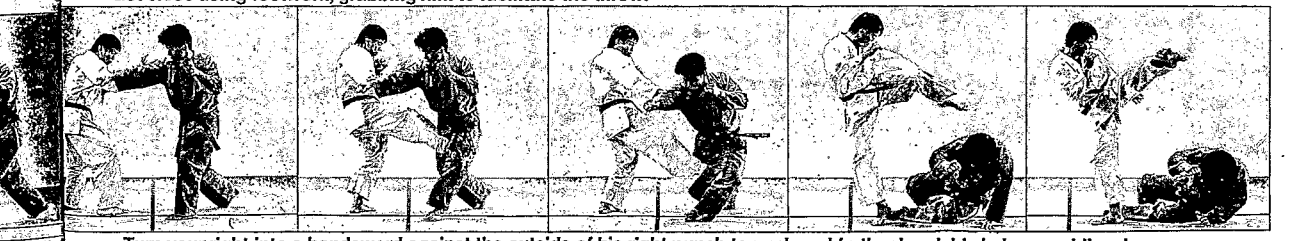


Outside block—common mistakes

If you block a left punch with a left outside block you will end up face-on to your opponent and, if you overdo the follow-through (see photo) you may lose your balance. You might as well just ask him to knock you down.

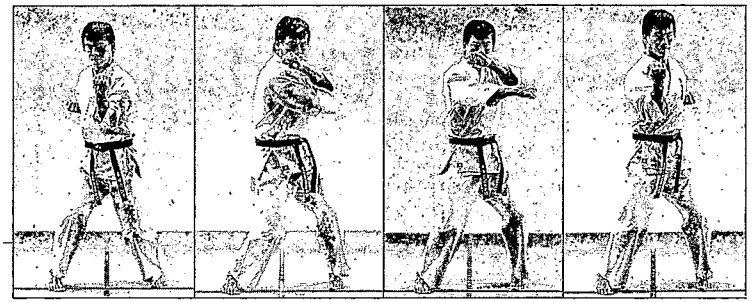


Break down his right front (triangle) attack with left outside block using your right arm from the outside to throw him back. Get close using footwork, grabbing him to facilitate the throw.



Turn your right into a handsword against the outside of his right punch to push and further break his balance, while advancing with your back leg, as you step into his inner thigh with your right foot. Finish him with a left roundhouse kick.

INSIDE BLOCK



Start a right inside block from the final position of a left.

Twist, wrapping your right arm around your body.

Don't expose your ribs, lead with the elbow, and twist.

Snap from the elbow to knock your opponent's attack away.

Be sure to draw back the blocking hand enough to build up tension. If your stretch is too small, tension will be limited.

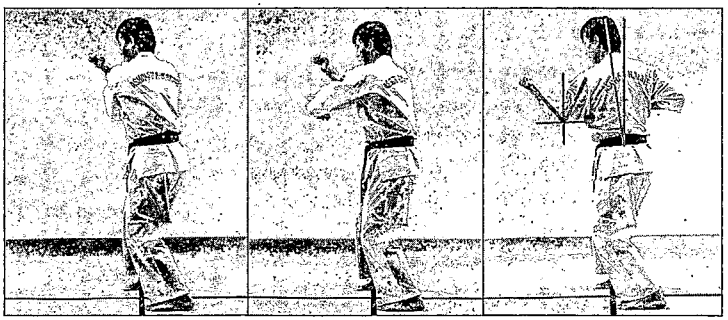
Middle inside block

Start in the pigeon-toe stance, wrap your arm around your body under the opposite arm, forearm parallel with the floor, to create tension. Lead with your elbow, describing a semi-circle. Stop your elbow directly in front of you, and snap the forearm up from the elbow to knock the attack away. Your fist should end up at shoulder level; keep your wrist straight, if you don't, you will find it difficult to convert it into a punch.

Unlike the outside block, use the inside block to deflect your opponent's left punch, knocking it from the outside inwards. The inside block is also used against grabs.

From inside block open your fingers, twist your wrist around, and you are in a hand-sword block. The impact is absorbed by closing the gap between your arm and side, stopping your elbow, and swinging your forearm to knock your opponent's attack away.

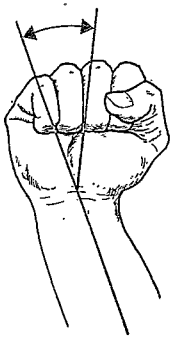
Continue with the left inside block. Practice taking on kicks and punches of varying height. Control the height of the block with your elbow.



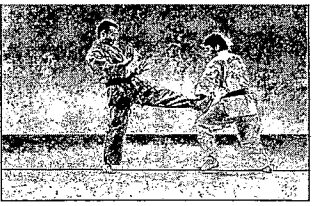
Make sure you guard your face with your other hand.

Lead with the elbow, swinging the forearm to knock away the attack.

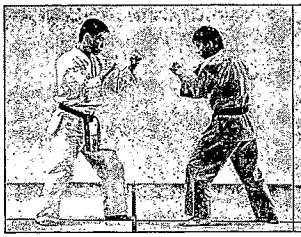
Strike in this position (45°), tightening the arm to follow through.



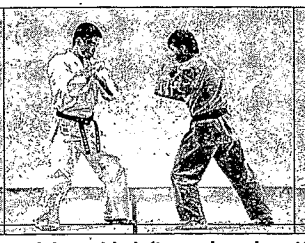
At impact, turn your wrist in the direction of your thum to create the snap to knock away the attacking arm. As the wrist plays a vital part in the technique, practice to increase flexibility.



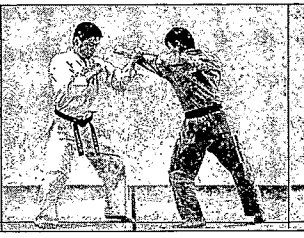
USE IN A REAL FIGHT

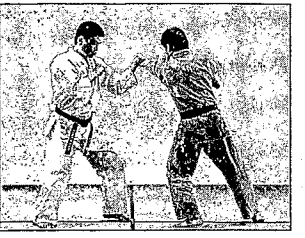


The inside block can be used in a real fight in its basic form.



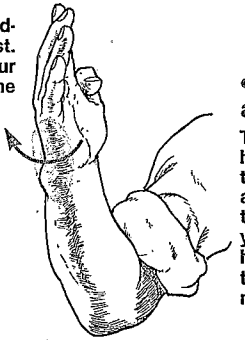
Anticipate his left punch and block with a left inside block.





Knock his punch away from the outside. As these movements can become stiff, Ashihara karate teaches you to combine the handsword inside block with footwork.

When you hit or block with a handsword, always imapct with the wrist. For a handsword block, turn your wrist in the direction indicated by the arrow at the moment of contact.



• Try to use a handsword block in a real fight

The handsword variation of the inside block has many uses in fights. The movement of the hand as it returns to its original position after completing an *outside* block can be thought of a handsword inside block. As you use the basic motion of turning your hand in the direction of your thumb, add the turn-over of the palm to knock your opponent's attack aside.

A MULTITUDE OF USES

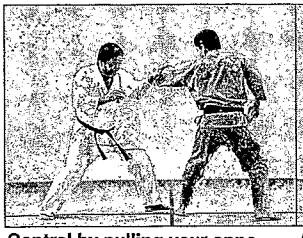
The inside block may be used in various ways in a fight. It can, of course, be used in its traditional form, but can also be used as a linking technique from other blocks. You should think in terms of one block being insufficient to break your opponent's stance in a fight. If he is a beginner you may be able to get away with it, but against a more experienced opponent you will need to add another linking technique to be sure to break his balance properly.

To prevent your opponent hitting at you a second or third time you must be able to attack from a safe and advantageous position. The inside block is the technique which will enable you to do just that.

After blocking, push in the direction of his movement. Use this in conjunction with footwork.

• 'Push and pull' after blocks

After blocking with an upper, an outside or a lower block, pull back the blocking hand instantly, then using the same or the opposite hand, follow up, pushing on the back of his elbow, his upper arm or his shoulder to further break his balance and kill his attack. After pushing him you can grab his clothing and pull him to destroy his balance. For this reason, it is important that you get into the habit of returning to your original stance after you have blocked.



Control by pulling your opponent after the inside block.

After blocking grab his jacket and, as you pull him back, hit him with a right low kick.

Control him as he goes down by holding the back of his head, then hit him with a knee strike as you pull him down.

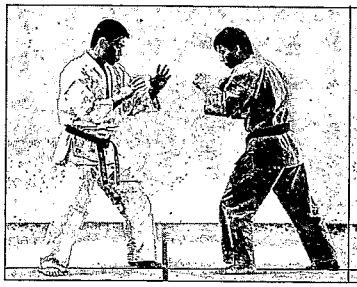
This is dangerous, so use your thigh instead of your knee in practice.

INSIDE BLOCK USE IN A REAL FIGHT

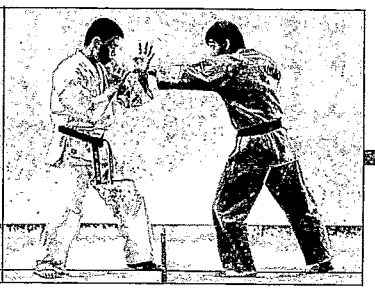
The three variations

The use of the inside block in a fight is opposite to that of the outside block. In orthodox style you block a left punch with your left hand. The use of the handsword in the inside block is similar to that in the outside block. The direction of the technique is of course different, but the same three variations (horizontal, diagonally upwards and downwards) are possible. Learn the three variations for the inside and outside blocks, then add the low and high blocks and you have a wide range of patterns at your disposal. You'll find that by combining each of the blocks with various punches, kicks and throws your range of control techniques also expands.

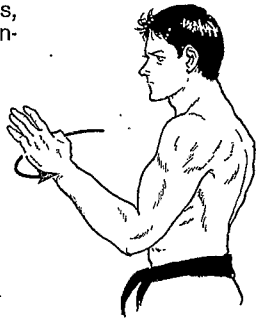
When you practice blocks, always try to devise assorted blocking and control patterns. Work on ways of adding attacking techniques to make your control of the opponent more natural, and faster. The most important thing is to increase the patterns of control at your command, rather than specializing in just one or two.



Inside block in response to the opponent's left punch. Up to impact keep your ribs covered.

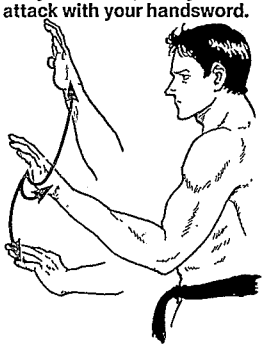


Block his left punch with left inside block. If he pulls back his punch, push him in the same direction, breaking his balance.



After impact of the inside block, turn your wrist, knocking his arm upwards. This leaves his ribs and kidneys completely exposed to your counter punch or kick. By pushing his shoulder after the block, you can destroy his balance.

At the point of impact, keeping your arm close to your side while leading with your elbow, turn your wrist, and knock away the attack with your handsword.



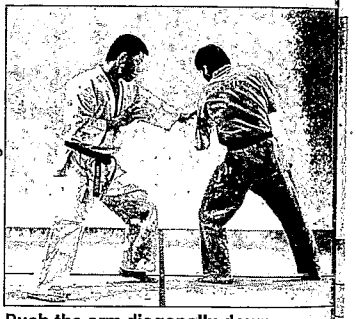
From impact to follow-through, lead with your elbow and twist at the wrist, changing the direction of force either horizontally, upwards or downwards, to smash your opponent's balance.

Upward deflection

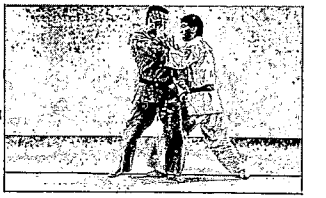
If he attacks with a high punch, deflect it upwards and push.

From the impact of your block, as you turn your wrist, break his balance diagonally downwards, leaving his face and the back of his head wide open to a punch or a kick. If you can position yourself on your opponent's outside, you can attack in any way you want.

Downward deflection

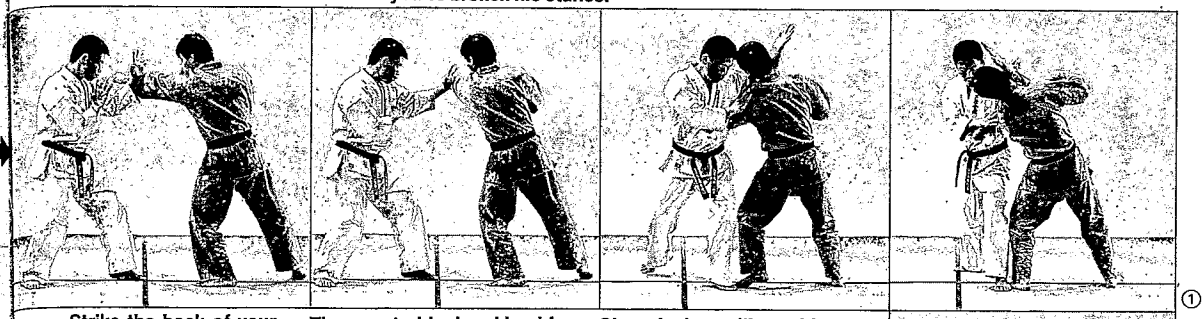


Push the arm diagonally downwards, opening his face and the back of his head to attack.



• Horizontal deflection

The basic inside block strikes against the back of your opponent's left elbow with a left handsword. As you turn your hand, push his arm away horizontally spinning him around and in. Follow up with a throw, punch or kick, depending on how you've broken his stance.



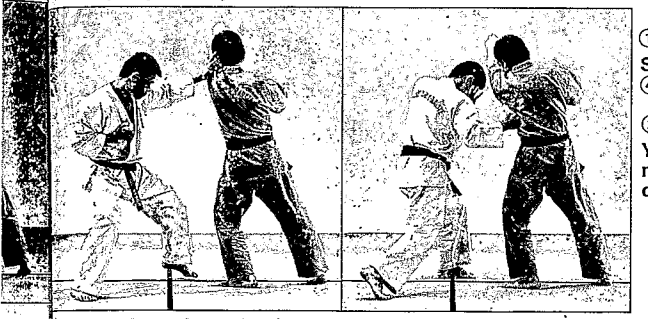
Strike the back of your opponent's elbow with a handsword, knocking his arm away horizontally as you turn your wrist.

Then control by breaking his balance to prevent recovery.

Close in by pulling with your right hand and cross-stepping with your left leg; bring your left hand up to his neck.

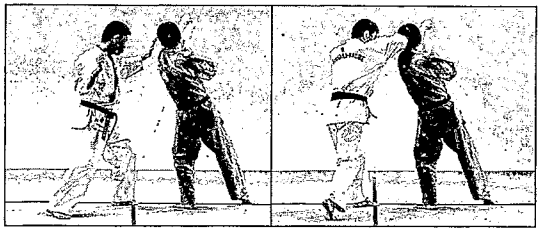
① Step back with your left leg (line ④), for a backward throw.

② You can also strike him with a right knee strike as he goes down.



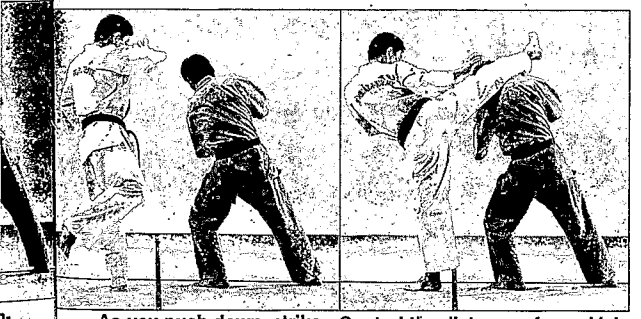
Push against his shoulder, further destroying his stance. Counterattack quickly.

Take advantage of his attempt to return to his stance, driving your punch into his ribs.



Having thoroughly wrecked his balance with an inside block, spin him around so he has his back to you. From the rear and outside positions any attack is possible. Look out for his backhand and elbow strikes.

Elbow strike to the defenseless back of the head. If you manage to get into this position, any kicking attack is possible: low, middle roundhouse, high etc.



As you push down, strike with a right high kick or attack his left leg with a low kick.

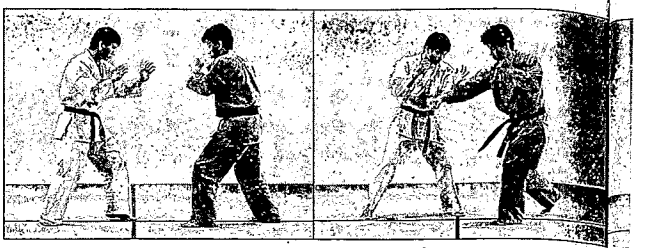
Control the distance of your kick through the twist of your pivot leg.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES From Inside

Most people understand the idea that in the orthodox style you block a right punch with an outside block, and a left with an inside, but when it comes down to it many are unable to actually apply the principle. In order to learn when to use the inside and when the outside, you need to train by taking a step back to spin your opponent's technique from the outside inwards over and over again. Once you have mastered this, the step back is gradually shortened until you start to train by stepping *in* to take up the outside position at the same time as you block. Remember: the shortcut to progress is not to overstretch yourslf, but to master each technique little by little.

• Outside block and push with handsword block

Using the outside block as the main technique, with an inside handsword block as a follow-up control technique, you can completely stop an attack. This can also be combined with footwork to even greater effect. You must coordinate movement in both your upper and lower body.

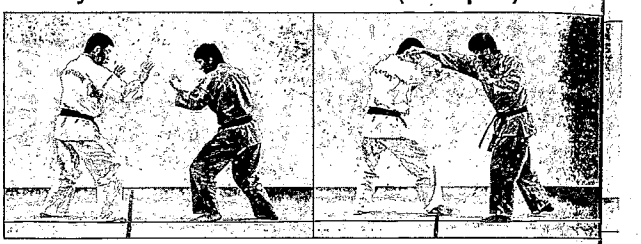


• Outside and inside blocks in response to a punch combination

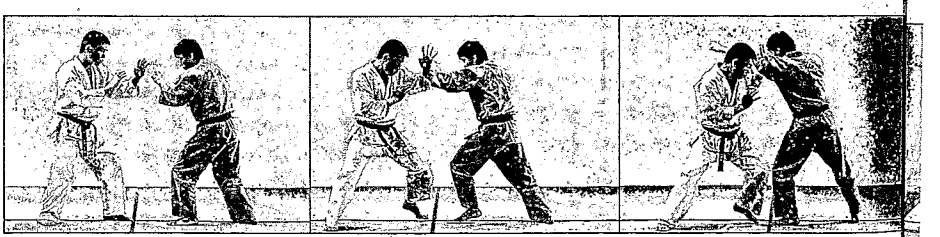
For a right-left punch combination attack, use a left outside then inside block. But think about it. The fact that your opponent is able to continue with a *combination* shows that you didn't block his first attack properly. It is essential to break up your opponent's first move correctly. If you allow him to get as far as his *third* technique, you are going to get what's coming.

• From the inside block, push away and follow with a back kick (southpaw)

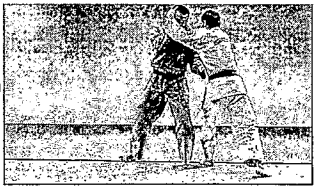
After blocking, lead him and control range through linking techniques, according to his distance and posture. With a technique like a back kick, where you turn your back to your opponent, pushing him away to break his balance is an important point. If you are too close to use the technique you had in mind, push him away and then strike.

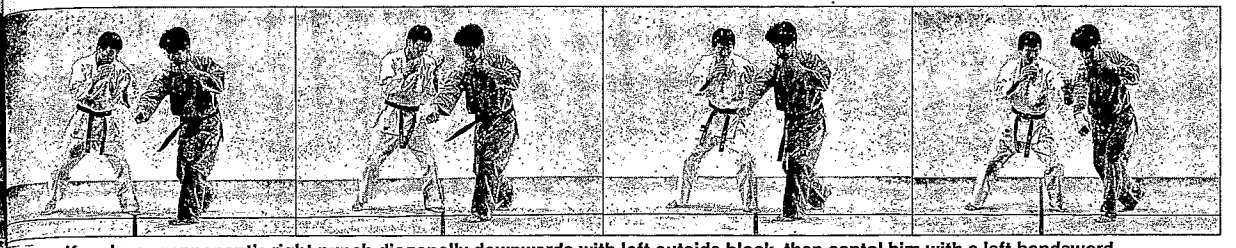


Use the gap created by breaking his left punch attack with a left inside block to step to his outside and take position behind him. Push firmly against his elbow or shoulder, or there is a danger that he'll attack the back of your head with a backhand or elbow strike as he pulls back his punching arm. Make sure you appreciate the risks which go with each of your movements.

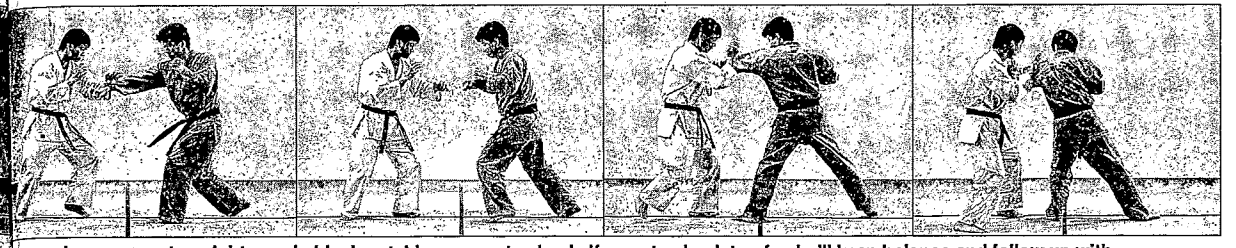


Block

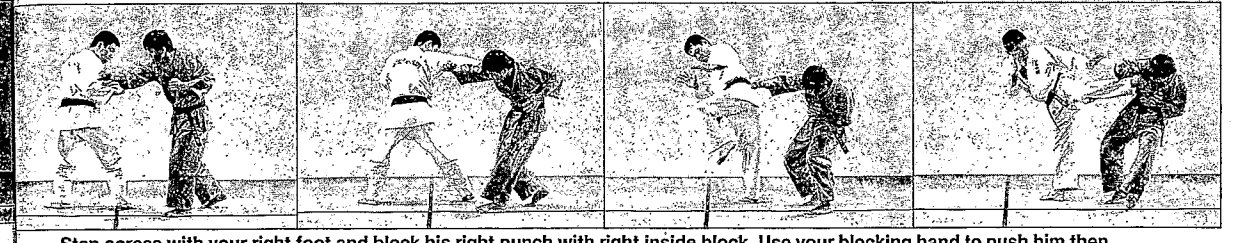




Knock your opponent's right punch diagonally downwards with left outside block, then contol him with a left handsword block to prevent him countering. How well you can use this linking technique will determine the outcome of the fight.



In response to a right punch, block outside as you step back. If you step back too far, he'll keep balance and follow up with a left punch. Read where the punch is going, sidestep and break his attack with an inside block.



Step across with your right foot and block his right punch with right inside block. Use your blocking hand to push him then kick. Remember: never show your back unless his balance is broken!

Step back to turn a left punch with a left inside block. Step to his outside with your left leg (line ①). Position yourself behind him with right step (line ②) and do a right outside block. Pull his upper body back with your hand while attacking his leg with a left low kick.

LOW PARRY

A right low parry starts from the finishing position of the left low parry.

Twist side-on and bring your right hand up by your left ear, winding up for the block.

Don't expose your ribs, drop the elbow.

Snap the elbow open, following the line of your body.

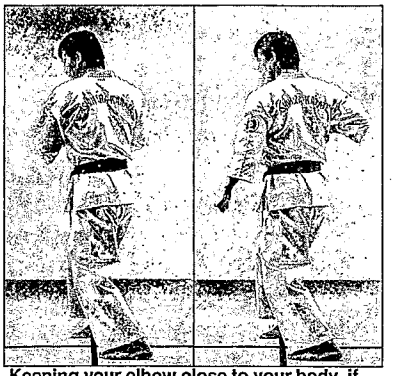
From impact to follow-through strike downwards.

The movement of the hands at the start of the technique is an application of the outside block, and provides cover for your face. Only when you understand this, will you be able to automatically guard your face in a real fight. If at first you find your arms don't move freely, do stretching exercises.

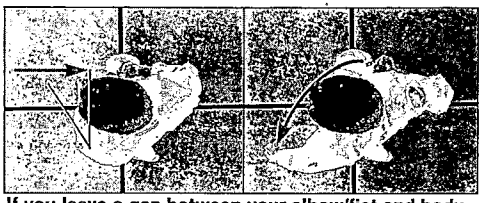
Low parry—block to drive through and down

Draw your blocking hand diagonally upwards, describing a circle, to a position by the opposite ear, pulling your upper arm and elbow close to your body. Twist your upper body and drop your arm downwards, leading with the elbow. At the moment of impact snap the elbow open, blocking with your forearm. Follow through to a point just outside your body, but don't lock your elbow. Keep your shoulders relaxed and don't allow too great a gap between elbow and body.

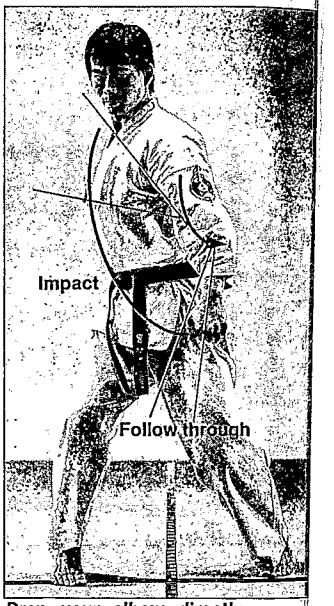
Carry out the movement ensuring that your forearm guards your body as it moves. Match the timing of your block with that of the twist in your hips and legs. When your hand is in position by your ear, if you turn the wrist and open your fingers, you will form a cross guard for your face (an application of the outside block.)



Keeping your elbow close to your body, if you strike down with your fist using your elbow as axis just before impact, you can develop sufficient power to cope with an opponent's kick.

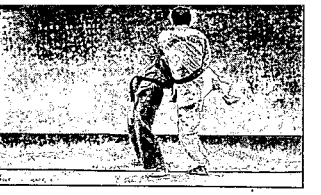


If you leave a gap between your elbow/fist and body, you won't be able to cover your right side from attack (arrow on left picture).



Drop your elbow directly down, strengthening it on impact and snapping; open to cover your lower body. When you follow through, don't lock your elbow.

USE IN A REAL FIGHT



Left low parry from the orthodox fighting stance.

Use your left hand flexibly to provide cover for your face and body.

At impact, parry as though inviting your opponent's attack in.

Follow through, leading your opponent to break his balance.

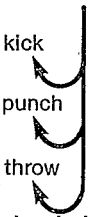
In a fight you would counterattack from here.

Use his momentum to break his balance

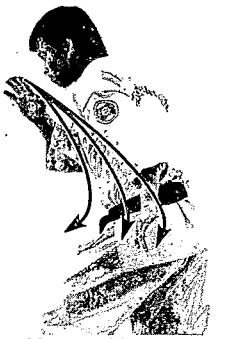
The left low parry is used in the orthodox style to block the opponent's left middle punch, left front kick and triangle kick. Be warned: it's called a 'low parry', but is not used to block kicks below waist level. If you try to block anything that low with a low parry you'll end up leaning forward dangerously. Such attacks should be blocked with knee blocks or footwork (knee blocks ⇨ p. 96).

The low parry is used in combination with footwork, as if inviting your opponent's technique in, letting it flow past you, then adding your own power to break his balance. After parrying counterattack according to his position.

• Follow-ups to the low parry



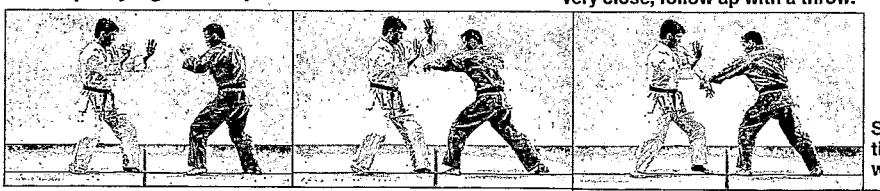
When you've knocked your opponent away with your parry and there is sufficient distance between you, follow up with a kick. When you are close and have him unbalanced, punch. If you have pulled him in very close, follow up with a throw.



After you block, vary the way in which you pull him according to the technique and state of his attack, then lead to break his balance.

Low parry as a punch counter.

•Low parry against a punch



Use of the low parry against a left punch.

Anticipate his left and, as you step back, parry low.

Spin him inwards, quickly getting into position to counter, while breaking his balance.

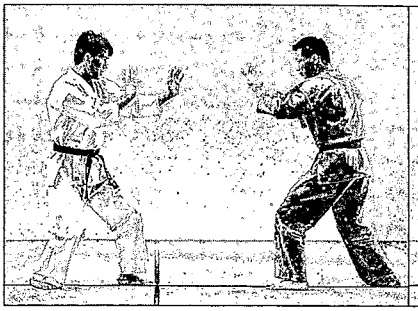
Push against his shoulder with the blocking hand.

Step in with your left foot, and punch with a straight right to the face.

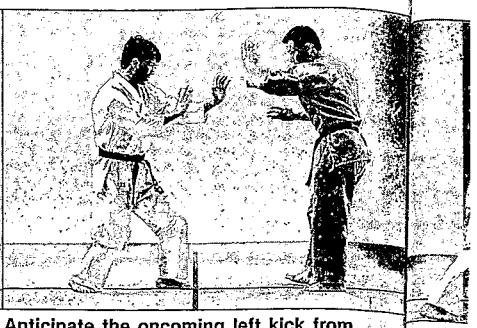
CONTROL TECHNIQUES From Low Parry

⊙ Low parry and step back

The low parry against a kick is always used in a real fight with a step back. The length of this step depends on your level, a beginner brings both feet to step back to a safe distance; the step will shorten until you can parry with only a small step back with the front foot. If you try to do too much as a beginner, weaving with the upper body without stepping at all, you will end up leaning back too far, placing yourself in a dangerous position. Keeping a slightly forward-leaning attitude after you have blocked is particularly vital with the low parry.



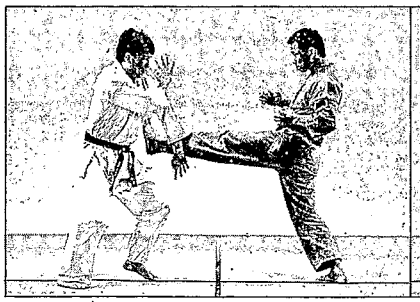
Controlling from low parry in response to left front kick (triangle kick).



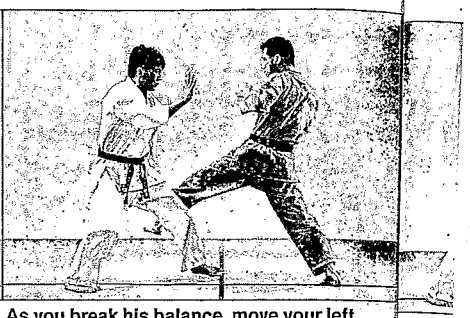
Anticipate the oncoming left kick from his right back leg movement.

⊙ Low parry to backward throw

The basic throw from the low parry is the backward throw. As you block, draw your opponent in to break his balance. Step to his outside and swing your blocking hand under his chin, throwing him as you draw back your foot. As you step in, protect yourself from his elbow with an outside block, pushing against the back of his shoulder. Take care also to maintain a guard for your face. As you throw him you can hit with a knee strike. The upward movement of your kick combined with his downward momentum will cause a lot of damage. (Backward throw ⇨ p. 132)



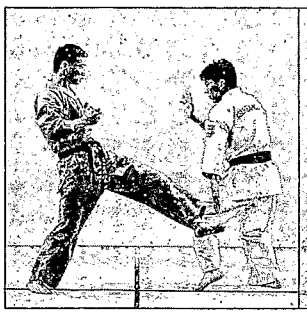
Left low parry in response to a left front kick, leading into a back throw.



As you break his balance, move your left foot along line (1), watching out for a left punch.

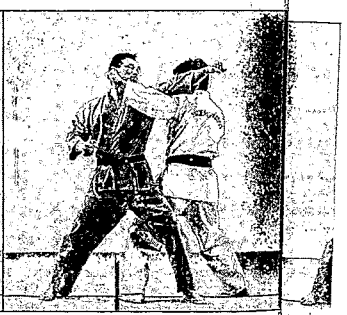
⊙ Low parry to roundhouse punch

This is an effective technique using the blocking arm to strike with after the parry is completed. Block with a low parry and step in close. Swing the blocking arm up in a semi-circle to strike your opponent with a roundhouse punch. Aim for his temple or his carotid artery. Students often overdo the movements in this technique, so make sure you keep it compact, and swing your arm up quickly from the parry through the sharp twist you learnt when practicing basics. Also many are afraid of getting too close and try to strike from too far back, ruining the effectiveness of the punch. At the point of impact, jam yourself tight in to him.

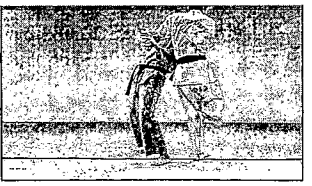


Roundhouse punch from low parry after closing in.

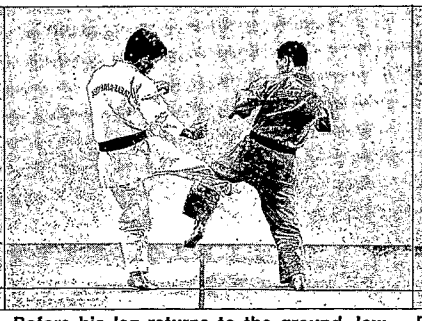
Step in with a right outside block and pull him in.



Roundhouse punch with hip-twist.

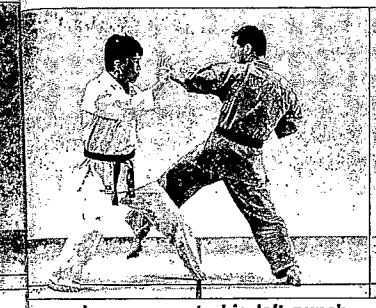


Move diagonally back to position [4] as you block.



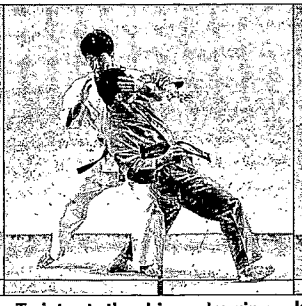
Before his leg returns to the ground, low kick to the back of his knee. (low kick ⇨ p.110)

Pull your kicking leg back to return to original stance. You can then finish your falling opponent with a double kick.



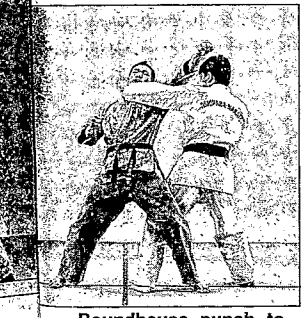
In response to his left punch, cover your face with a right outside block. Grab him with your right.

Shift your weight over your left leg, close in, and bring your left hand up under his chin.



Twist at the hips, drawing your right foot around wide (line ④), to throw him.

In practice, avoid banging the back of your opponent's head on the floor, by holding his jacket to break the fall.



Roundhouse punch to the carotid artery. Your right hand should be pushing against the back of his left elbow.

◎ Cross upper

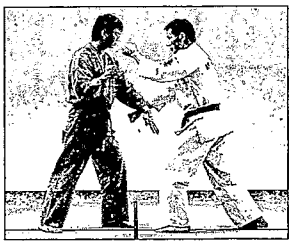
As with the roundhouse, get in close, but this time use the blocking hand to hit him with a cross upper punch. The deciding factor at impact is how far in you bring your hips. I've seen some who can manage when shadow training by themselves, but then pull back their hips against a real opponent. It's crucial that you apply what you learnt in basic training without a moment's hesitation or fear.

From low parry, step in for a cross upper punch.

Shift your hips forward, get in close, punch through him as you twist at the hips.

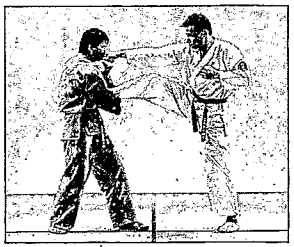
HAND BLOCKS—COMMON MISTAKES

Blocks are designed to protect you from your opponent's attacks, so it follows that if you make a single mistake you will be felled. While watching students practicing control techniques and sparring, I see many frightening examples of badly executed blocks inviting the opponent to flatten the defender. If it was just a matter of being knocked down, it wouldn't matter so much, but with many bad blocks the opponent's technique is actually invited in, making it a matter of course that the defender will be on the receiving end of a counter which will probably badly injure him. Once that happens it's too late, so let's take a closer look at the hand block errors you must *never* make. Bear in mind always the two golden rules: never end up facing you opponent head on, never try to hand block any technique aimed below your hips.



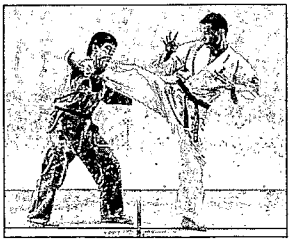
• Never face your opponent head on

The most common mistake. If you block an opponent's right punch with a left low parry, you set yourself up to receive a follow-up punch in the face. The same thing happens if you block his left punch with a left outside block. Remember to always turn your opponent inwards from the outside.



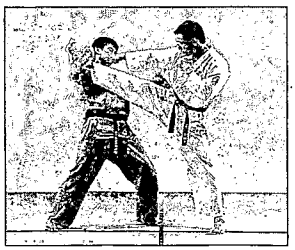
• Never try to catch your opponent's kick

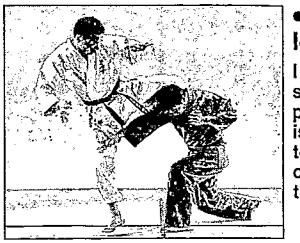
To try to catch an opponent's front kick is, first of all, impossible. You expose your body to his kick and might as well just ask him to kick through you. As you can see in the photo, the front kick has hit home.



• If you catch him and lose your balance, you've no chance

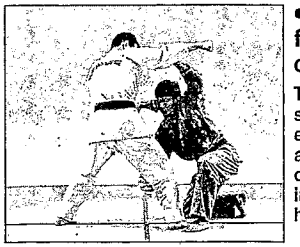
The idea of trying to catch a kick in the first place is senseless. There is no comparison between the speed of a kick with the body's momentum behind it and that of the hand trying to grab it. Even catching a high kick from underneath is very difficult. Even if you do manage the catch, at that moment you'll be leaning backwards, as you can see in the photo: balance completely broken and begging for a punch in the mouth. Of course, if your opponent is slow, you will be able to down him, but don't fool yourself that you'll get such a lucky break in a real fight.





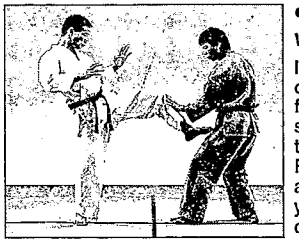
• Don't try to punch the legs

I can't imagine why, but I sometimes see people trying to punch their opponent's legs. It is pretty obvious from the photo that you're offering the back of your head and your face as a target for a kick.



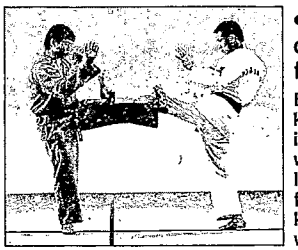
• Lowering your head as far as his waist is a sign of defeat

This technique makes more sense than the one above, but even so, it's very dangerous. By attempting to scoop up your opponent's leg, you are in fact inviting him to kick you in the head.



• Don't try to stop a kick with your hand

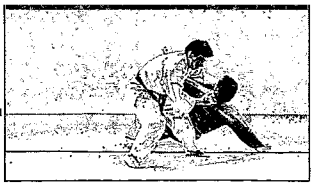
It is reckless to try and stop an opponent's kick with your hand from the front. There is a massive difference in power between the arm and the leg. Furthermore, in trying to block an attack lower than your hips, you are leaving your face wide open.

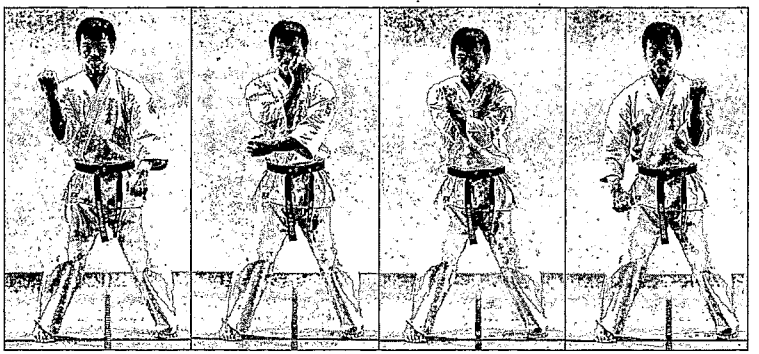


• Never try to perform an outside block using the foot

Even though your opponent kicks from outside inwards, it is reckless to try to block this with your foot. It is meaningless trying to match a blocking foot with the impact power of a kick. The outside block *only* works with the hand.

INSIDE BLOCKING
LOW PARRY





The finish position of a right inside block and left low parry.

Lead with the elbows, keep movements compact.

Don't expose your ribs, keep your elbows tight, move left and right simultaneously.

At impact, let your forearms explode out.

The movements of your hands should describe an egg shape in front of the body providing cover as you block. (Also practice with your hands open, guarding your face.)

Inside blocking low parry

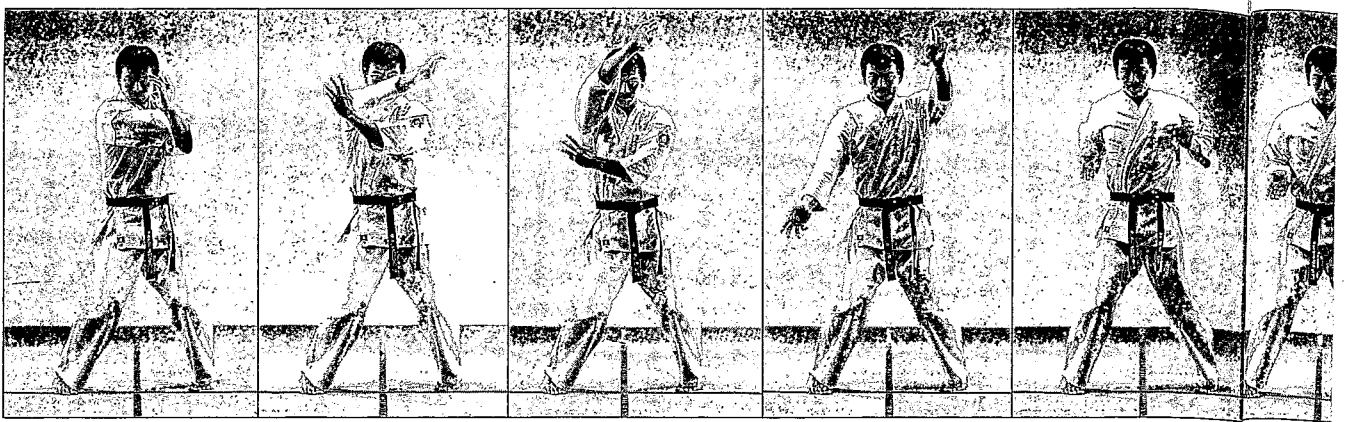
As the name suggests, this technique is the simultaneous combination of the inside and low blocks. Accordingly, the points to watch are the same as explained above for the inside block and low parry.

There are many people who can't carry out different motions simultaneously with each hand. They manage one hand fine, but the other tends to go haywire. This is a problem not confined to karate, but is due to insufficient development of body control. The control needed can be developed through this simultaneous block. The outside block low parry combination is used in response to a combination attack. So if, as you block your opponent's left front kick with a low parry, he counters with a right backhand, an elbow blow or a back roundhouse kick, block instantly with a hand-sword inside block. It is a two-handed, split-second blocking movement against the momentum of a strong combination attack.

To maintain the effectiveness of the combination, take care not to overdo the action, make it compact and fast. Keep your arms tight in to your body. At impact, snap both forearms out, not letting your elbows move away from your body. Keep your hips stable.

Don't expose your ribs, wrap your elbows around your body and keep the movement compact. Keep your hips steady, avoiding vertical movement. Don't just block with your upper body, use the spring in your knees.

ROUNDHOUSE BLOCK



Begin with your right hand guarding the left side of your face.

Begin moving both hands simultaneously, breathing in slowly.

Don't move your arms away from your body, slowly describe a small circle with your elbows.

Don't extend your arms too far: there is no need for a wide circle.

Draw both hands back as far as possible, breathing in deeply.

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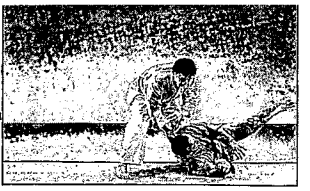
Think of the roundhouse block as a 'method of breath control'. In addition, it'll help you master the simultaneous use of both hands. The traditional starting position for the roundhouse is the left hand under the right elbow. In Ashihara karate, however, the palm of the right hand is turned outwards between the shoulder and ear as a guard for your face. *Get into the habit of always guarding your face in a real fight.* This movement is also the basis of the forward and backward throw. If you punch with your right, guard with the left; punch with the left, guard with the right. Take care not to let him get in a lucky punch with his last desperate efforts. Always control him with care. In basic practice of this block, make sure you don't let your elbow become separated from your body (the diameter of the circle described by your elbow should be 10–15cm). Move both arms at the same speed and control your breathing.

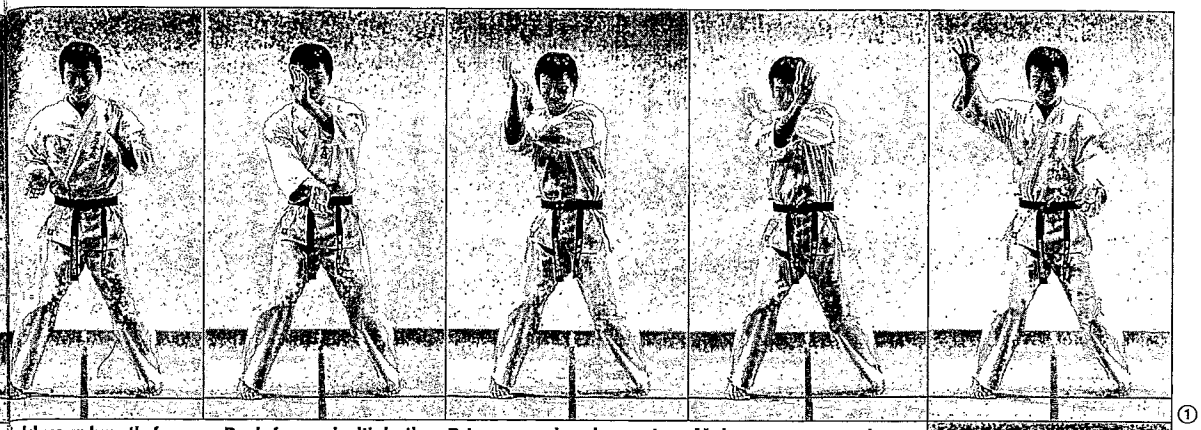
Left fingers should point upwards, right downwards. Drawing both hands back as far as possible, stretch your chest.

Arms tight in to your body, then drive forward down the centerline as if to strike with the palm heel.

Repeat the block, starting with right fingers upwards and left downwards

Keep your lower body stable, breathe out as you push forward slowly and powerfully.





①

old your breath for a oment, then, as you ive both hands for- ards, breathe out.

Push forward with both hands down the center-line of your body.

Bring your hands up to guard the right side of your face.

Make sure your lower body is stable, breathe through your nose.

②

③

After learning each block individually, you must learn how to use them in combination. For instance, against a straight right, unbalance him a little with a left outside block, then further destabilize him at the same time by using a right handsword inside block. This, in effect, is a roundhouse block. You can also unbalance him when he tries to grab you with his left hand, using a left low parry, a right outside block and a left handsword block. As you train always to try to combine several small techniques to big effect using a flow of techniques to follow up your blocks with an attack.

In response to your opponent's attack, block correctly with your first technique, link up smoothly with your next technique and lead him, giving him no time to attack you again, and thus making it easy for you to counter.

If his movements are big, use his own power against him, leading the flow of his techiniques; in such cases you can fell him easily with a small technique, then follow up with your own counterattack.

①Breathe deeply, aiming to build power in your stomach.

②Fill your lungs with as much oxygen as possible, hold your breath for a moment, then breathe out.

③As you push forward with your hands expel all the air in your lungs through your mouth.

ROUNDHOUSE BLOCK USE IN A REAL FIGHT

Block as you position yourself

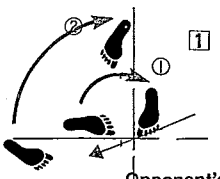
The roundhouse block is the most effective hand block for use in a real fight. The left outside block is the main technique; you then use the right hand push as a linking technique to stop a counterattack.

Step naturally to fit with the movement of your right hand during the linking technique, and you can step smoothly into position. To put it the other way round, peform your outside block and the linking technique with the other hand to fit with your positioning. If either your positioning, or the movement of your hands is wrong, the whole thing will go to pieces.

The idea is to block your opponent's kick or punch with an outside block, stepping outside as you do so, then push on the back of his head or neck to force his face downwards, preventing his next attack. Once he is facing down, he can't see what you are doing and has, in effect, lost. In Ashihara karate control and sparring, if the roundhouse block is correctly performed, it is counted as a point.

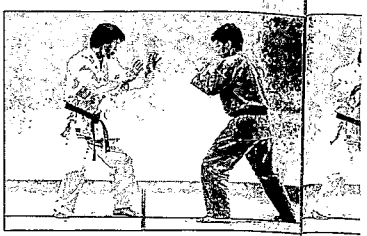
From position 1

Since the roundhouse block involves moving to the outside of your opponent while simultaneously getting close to him, it is carried out from either position 1 or 2. You can also step back, then step into position as you perform the outside block, but remember that the step is more important than the block. The ideal is to be able to carry out the technique without that step back.



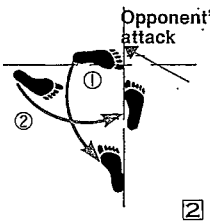
Get close for a knee strike

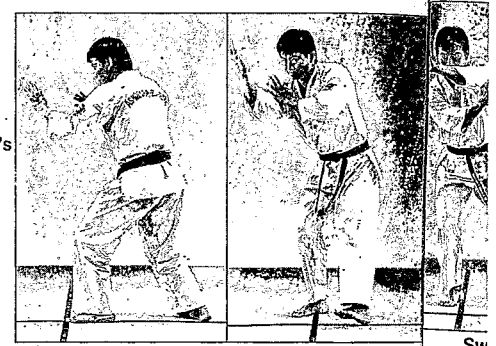
The mostly commonly used technique as a follow-up to a roundhouse block is a knee strike. Control the opponent from the outside and hit his exposed body with the knee. This is a typical in-fight control move. Follow up with an elbow strike to the back of the head, or a throw.



From position 2

The photos here show the technique from the *opposite* direction for clarity. They show the footwork for the roundhouse block from position 2. In this case, since you are using a right outside block, the steps come first. As you move into southpaw style by stepping forward along line ② with your right foot, execute an outside block with your right hand, pulling your left foot around wide along line ③.





Roundhouse block from position 2.

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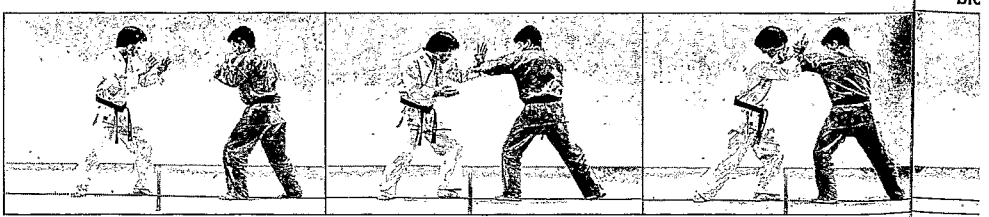
Get close for a forward throw

A forward throw from the roundhouse block is a control technique. Use your opponent's momentum as he launches his attack, combined it with that from the twist in your hips to take him by the back of his head and throw him. You can also hit him with a knee strike as you throw him.



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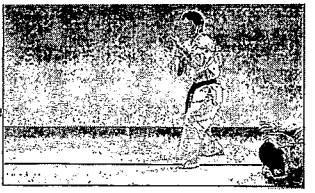
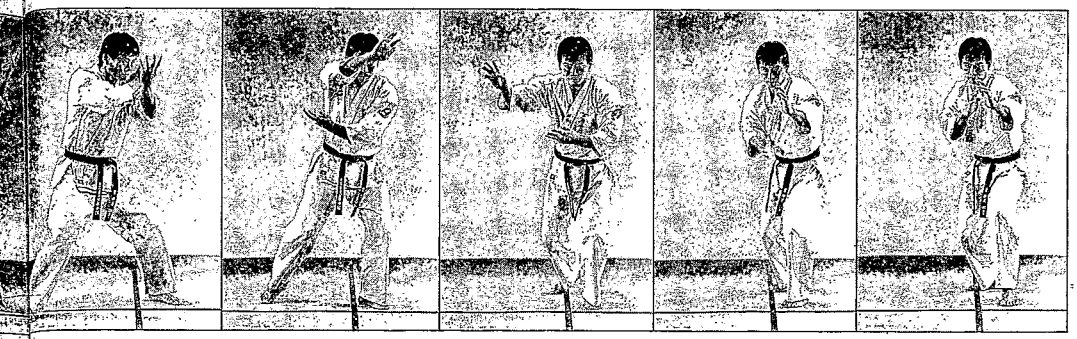
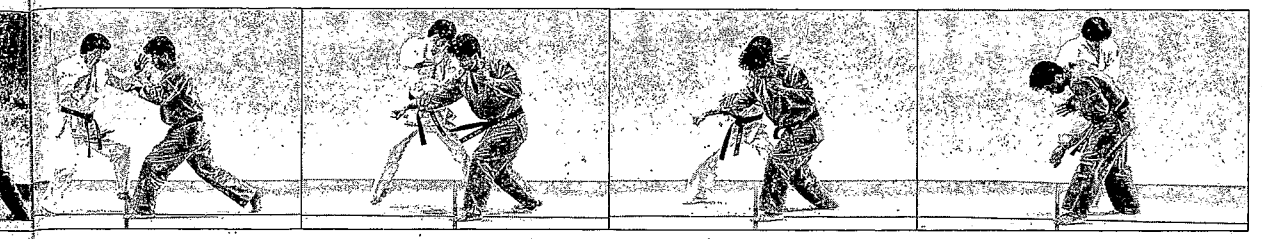
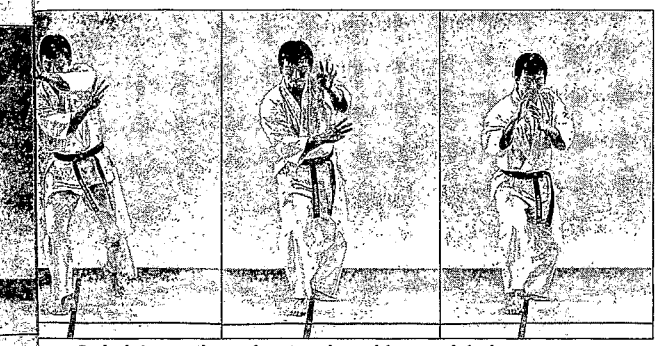




Roundhouse block training—move to position [1] from fighting stance while performing a left outside block. At impact, begin to press with the right hand. From the outside block position, step in to close up.

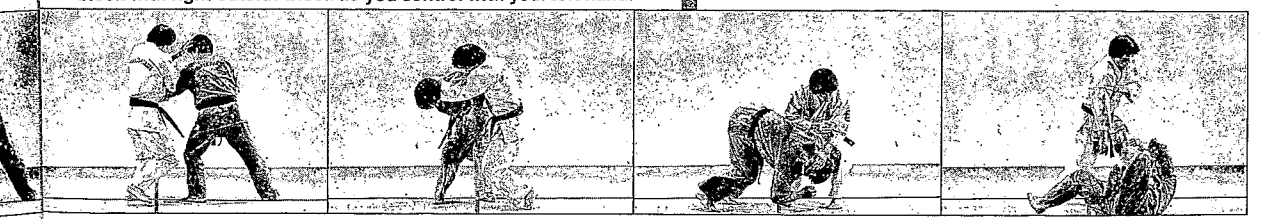


Control technique using the roundhouse block in response to a right punch. Outside block to knock his right punch diagonally downwards: control the punching arm with your right hand and strike with the knee. Generate power by drawing the foot back.



Switch to southpaw by stepping with your right leg, block with right outside block as you control with your left hand.

Combining the downward momentum of your throw with the strength of a knee strike can cause a lot of damage.



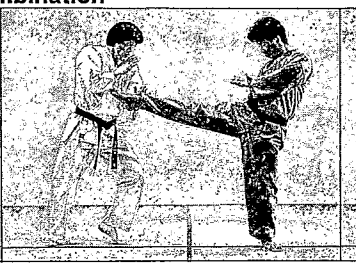
In response to a left punch, block with a left inside block, then a right outside block as you move your right foot down line (2), controlling his arm with your left hand. Control safely and surely according to the speed and level of his punch. Learn to step correctly first.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES From Roundhouse

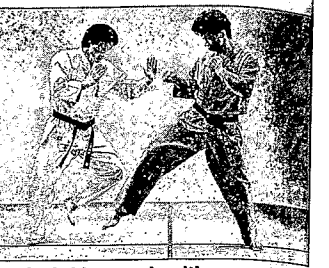
• Control techniques in response to a punch-kick combination

Remember that in a fight your opponent will always attack with combinations. Don't be satisfied with just one block: keep up your guard, push and pull your opponent, and always keep your free hand ready to block. Since the roundhouse block is two techniques in one, it is perfect for use against combinations.

Controlling a right front kick (triangle kick)/straight right combination.



Block his kick with a left outside block; return quickly to your stance for his next attack.

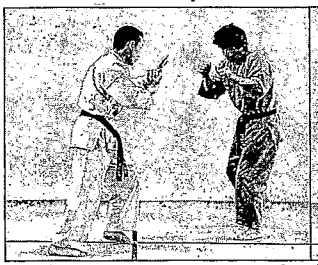


Block his punch with an outside block as you step along line ① with your left foot.

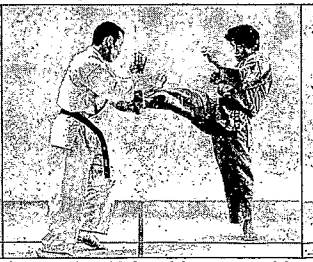
The 'Can Opener'

In a fight, the roundhouse block can be used as a locking technique, to secure your opponent's upper arm, leaving him face fownwards. In this role we nickname it the 'can opener'. The lock itself can be counted as an attacking technique. You can also add a knee strike or a throw. It is especially effective for self-defense because it stops your opponent's movement dead. Take care not to get punched as you move in to trap his upper arm from below.

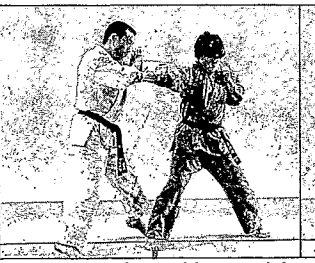
• Control techniques for the 'can opener'



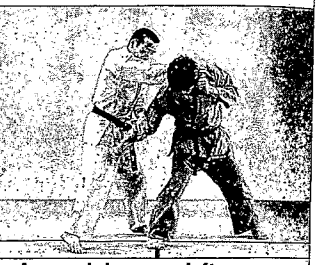
In response to your opponent's right front kick and right punch...



block the kick with an outside block while stepping in close.



Guard your face with your right hand as you apply the lock ('can opener') with your left.

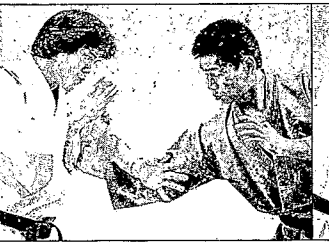


As you bring your left arm around his, push with your right to break his balance.

• Application of the 'can opener'

Use of the 'can opener' against an opponent trying to grab your lapel.

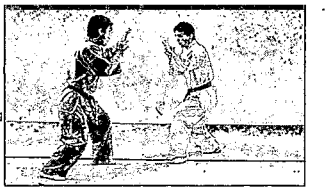
Before he can get a good grip, pull him in by pushing his elbow down from diagonally above with an outside block.

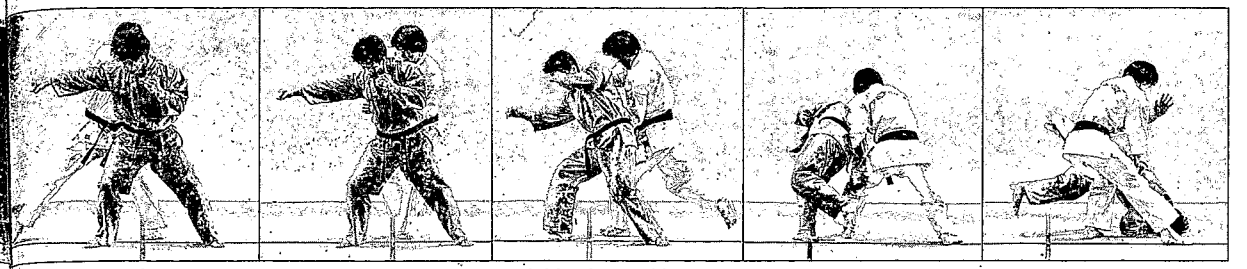


Drop your arm as if executing a low parry, bending his arm and pulling him closer to you.

Push him with your right hand as you wind your left arm up around his.

Block





Get to his outside, pushing him with your right hand.

Sweep your right leg around wide behind you (line ④); use the turning motion to throw him with a forward throw.

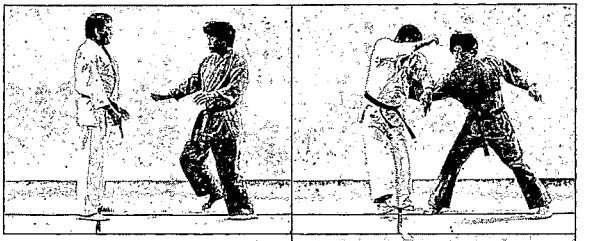
Push him down with your right hand, using the outstep and twist in your hips.

Keep your hips stable, using the left hand to back up the throw.

Using your twisting motion, you can throw him quite easily.

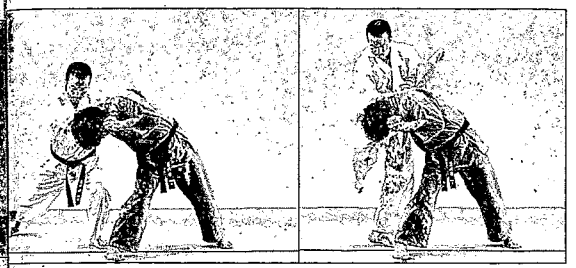
◎ The 'can opener' as self-defense

The technique is effective when your opponent tries to grab your lapel. It works best if you catch him before he has a chance to get a proper hold, and you'll find the timing easier.



Your opponent tries to grab you with his right hand.

Strike diagonally down against his elbow, bend his arm, then break his balance by drawing back your right leg, applying the 'can opener' as you control him with your right hand.



Pull your right foot back wide, destroying his balance to complete the technique.

With the spring created in the right leg, knee strike to the face.

Get in close, chopping the back of his neck with handsword.

Turn with a step to put the lock on his shoulder.

Twist his arm up behind his back, to control his upper body. Don't let him cover his face.

From this position, he can offer no resistance. He's also open to a knee strike combination.

■ Basic practice sequence

1. Front high kick

2. Knee strike

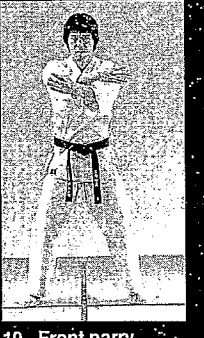
3. Groin kick

4. Front kick

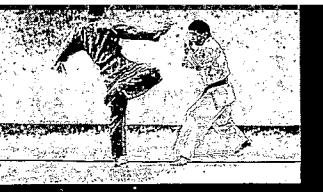
5. Roundhouse kick

KICKS

9. Circular reverse punch



10. Front parry



• Basic practice

Check your technique from the bottom up and from the point closest to your center of gravity

During basic practice, contract each part of the kick as much as possible to create tension, which is then released through the turning motion of the kick. If you don't turn your hips enough, the technique will lack power and you'll lose balance. Kicks depend on flexibility. Stretching the hip joint ('the splits') is therefore a vital part of training. High kicks are higher and sharper if you have a good turn and stretch in the hip joint.

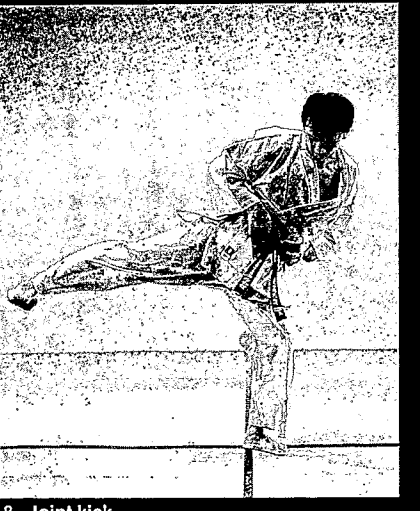
Keep hold of your belt while practicing kicks! If your hands are free, you'll use them to stabilize yourself, and never notice how really bad your balance is. It is very difficult to correct bad balance once it becomes a habit, so if you can balance without using your hands, then you'll easily be able to punch and guard yourself as you kick in a real fight. For those who have a problem with balance, first master both the kicking motion and the twisting action of the hips while holding onto a hand rail, and gradually develop a sense of balance.

Make sure:
- your pivot leg is stable.
- your pivot leg knee is not pointing outwards.
- weight shift is smooth and fast.
- the twist at the hips is smooth and sharp.
- your hips are flexible.
- your shoulders aren't tense.
- there's enough spring in your knees and hips.
- power is concentrated at the point of impact.
- you don't follow through too much.
- you are training out of the front stance.
- you extend your pivot leg in the direction of impact.

Let the leading edge of your attack run freely to its target. It's helpful here to train to kick *without* turning your supporting leg, using the spring and turn in hips, the kicking leg and the knee of the supporting leg instead.

6. High side kick

7. Side kick



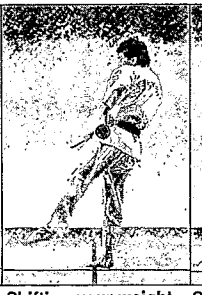
8. Joint kick

FRONT HIGH KICK

Kick high with the turn and stretch of the hip joint

Start from the front stance, keeping the hips low.

Move your body weight diagonally upwards, kicking with the turn in your hips.



Shifting your weight onto your pivot leg, kick with the momentum.

Swing your hips inwards, opening up the joint.

Concentrate on the movement of the hips.

Your kicking leg and pivot leg should form a vertical line without affecting balance. Most important is the opening of the hip joint achieved through stretching.

Stretch and the front high kick

This kick is not used as it is in real fighting, but is very important for the understanding it gives you of the use of feet, hips and hip joints in kicking.

Kick basics to be learnt from the front high kick

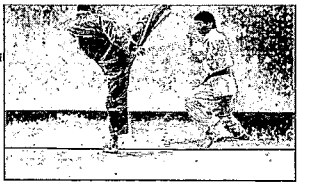
- Legs

1 Pivot leg:
Smooth shift of body weight over the front (pivot) leg.
Tension, spring and release in the knee. Check position of the knee in the front stance at the start of the technique. Transfer weight to the pivot leg and extend it at the point of impact.
Keep your pivot leg knee stable: don't let it drift outwards. If it does, you won't be able to put your body behind the technique, and you'll lose power. Conquer the problem by imagining a wall just outside your knee. During basic practice, master the correct extension of the kicking leg by keeping the heel of the pivot leg on the ground. Twist the hips through a 45°-60° arc.

2 Kicking leg:
Extension of the knee from the front stance (halfbody) position (the position for building tension).

Kick with your ankle extended asw far as this point. From here onwards, bend the ankle back, kicking upwards without tipping over the upper body.

Twist at the hips, shifting your weight onto your pivot leg, and kick with the momentum. Twist your hip joint inwards. If you don't twist at the hips, you wreck your own balance. During basic practice, keep your pivot foot flat on the ground to stretch your Achilles tendon.



Snapping open the knee at the point of impact, and use of the ankle. Keep the ankle extended until it reaches face height, then bend it in.
Quick return of the pivot leg.

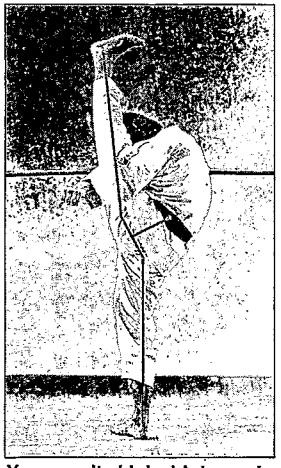
• Twist in the hips

All kicks depend on twist in the hips. You kick with the forward momentum produced from the weight shift onto your pivot leg, transmitted through the twist. If you don't put your hips into the kick, you'll be felled easily and won't be able to stretch the ankle of your pivot leg.

• Kicks and balance

Remember: no balance—no power. Those who find it difficult to maintain their balance while kicking should begin practice while holding onto a handrail.
Check from the pivot leg. Start off slowly, shifting your body weight onto your pivot leg. The front high kick is also useful as a stretching exercise for the hips and hip joints. Always start kick training lightly and slowly. If you worry too much about the hight of the kick, you'll lose balance either forwards and backwards, left or right. Raise your kicking leg without changing the angle of your upper body. Try to improve by a millimeter a day. Don't rush and you will find progress comes slowly but surely. Kick up past the center of your body to a point beside your ear. To improve your stretch, practice inner and outer roundhouse kicks.

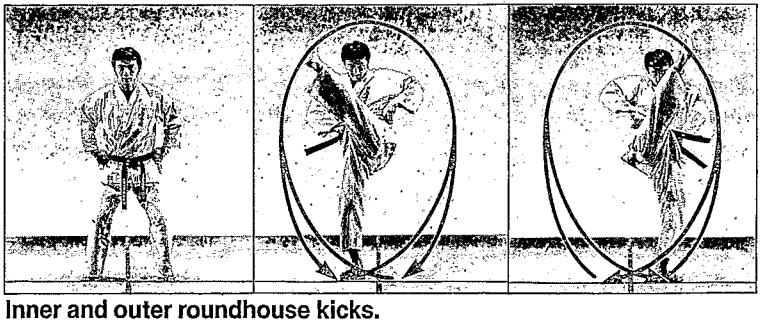
Stretching the hip joint



You can't kick high and smoothly if your hip joints are stiff. Practice using a handrail to keep your balance.

Train with a partner—rest your foot on his shoulder, leaning into him to stretch the tendons and loosen the hips.

The splits. You can train by leaning forward or to the side from this position. Even the stiffest among you can achieve flexibility by training every day.



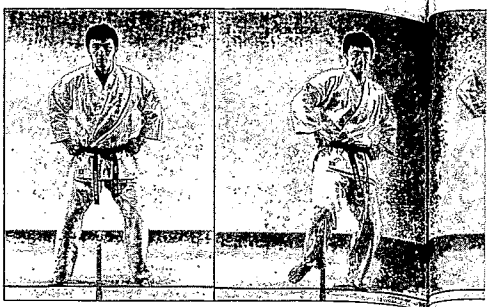
Inner and outer roundhouse kicks.

These are kicks that will help stretch your hip joints. Keep your joints flexible, describing a wide circle with your leg.

KNEE STRIKE

The basis for all kicks

Kick the knee up to the chest using the spring from your pivot leg knee and the twist in your hips. Keep the striking knee and the heel pulled in, hit up with the knee itself. Use the twist of your hips to control range between middle, short and long. Note that the movement of the knee throughout this technique is the same as that in all kicks. Try to develop the same sharp, clean technique as for the elbow strike: this will provide the basis for good, fast strikes.



Take hold of your belt with both hands in a natural stance.

Twist at the hips, kicking as you shift your weight onto your pivot leg.

Kick s that t

Use in a real fight

The knee strike has a multitude of uses.

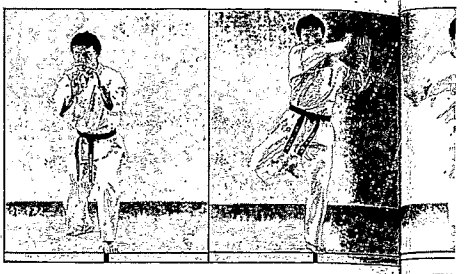
1. Roundhouse knee strike. Bring your knee up to your side and strike in roundhouse style as far as the centerline of your body.
2. Stabbing knee strike. Strike diagonally upwards from the outside in a straight line.
3. Vertical knee strike. As in basic practice, strike upwards in a straight line.
4. Gouging knee strike (knee block). Pull the thigh and knee back sharply, striking outwards against the opponent's kick as though gouging at his leg. (The important point here is weight shift.)

The knee strike is usually used in combination with stepwork as a slide kick, (kicking as you step in with the pivot leg), in this way countering your opponent's momentum. It is mostly used at short range, but once you've mastered the technique of using footwork to rapidly close distance, you can also apply it from long and middle range.

In Ashihara karate, we use the knee strike most frequently as part of control techniques to destroy the opponent's balance, or as a counter as he is going down (in training use the thigh rather than the knee to avoid injury).

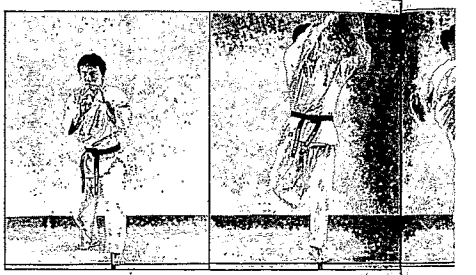
◉ Roundhouse knee strike

In the usual roundhouse fashion, strike from the outside inwards, if you snap open the leg at the knee just before impact, your knee strike will become a roundhouse kick. The knee strike is excellent training—master it and you'll also be able to use your knee properly for all kicks.



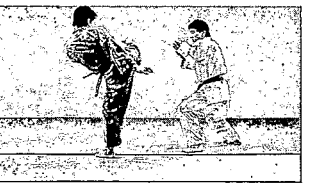
◉ Stabbing knee strike

As with the front kick (triangle kick), the knee strikes sharply inside in a straight line. For this technique you need to be able to read the range instantly. (Groin kick ⇨ p.99.)

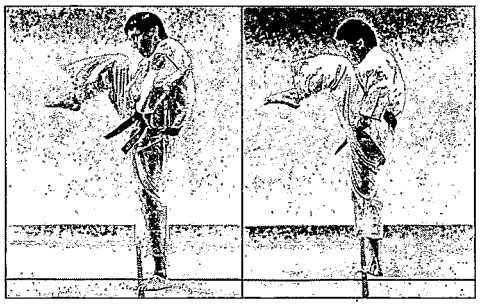


◉ Vertical knee strike

Kick vertically upwards in a straight line: a technique similar to the front and groin kicks. For each strike, shift your weight forward over your pivot leg, using the resultant momentum to kick. (Groin kick ⇨ p.99)



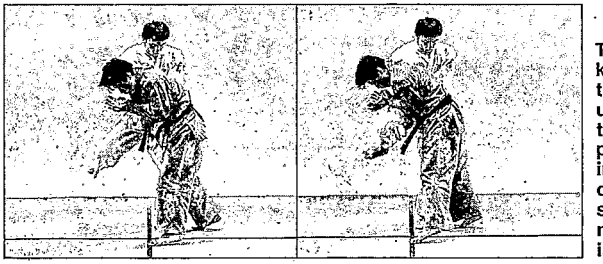
Kick sharply through that twist.



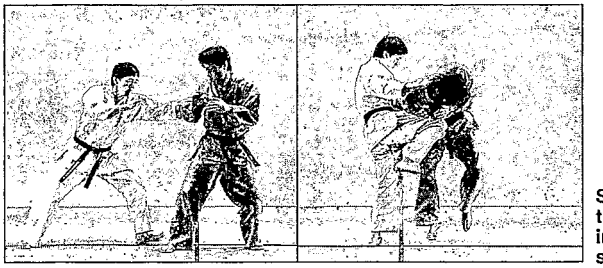
Right knee strike. Kick as if trying to hit your own chest.

Left knee strike. Twisting your hips diagonally upwards will enable you to strike high.

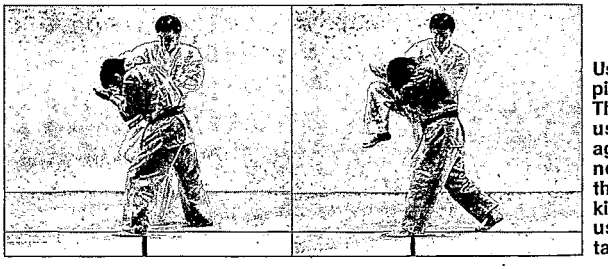
From a right strike move onto a left. Don't let your upper body wobble; stretch your pivot leg in the direction of impact.



The roundhouse knee strike is used to hit diagonally upwards and through your opponent's body in infighting. The use of the hands to stop your opponent's movements is vital.



Stabbing knee strike—as you step in, simultaneously pull him onto your strike, combining your forward momentum with his to smash into his body (or face).



Use the spring in your pivot leg to kick high. The vertical strike is usually employed against your opponent's face. Don't think that the knee kick should only be used against low targets.

KNEE BLOCK APPLICATION OF THE KNEE STRIKE

Knee block (the gouging knee strike)

The gouging knee strike can be used both as an attacking technique and as a blocking technique. The front leg (left in orthodox style) is used to block triangle kicks and roundhouse kicks aimed below the waist. Use the knee strike to knock back your opponent's right kicks. If he switches from a roundhouse kick below the waist to one aimed at your ribs, strike out to the side with your left elbow, creating a double block. Combine the knee block with an instep to catch his kick before it shifts into gear, striking your knee through his inner thigh. Use your leading hand to break his balance. You could also employ a roundhouse knee block or a stabbing knee block.

Knee block against an opponent's right roundhouse kick.

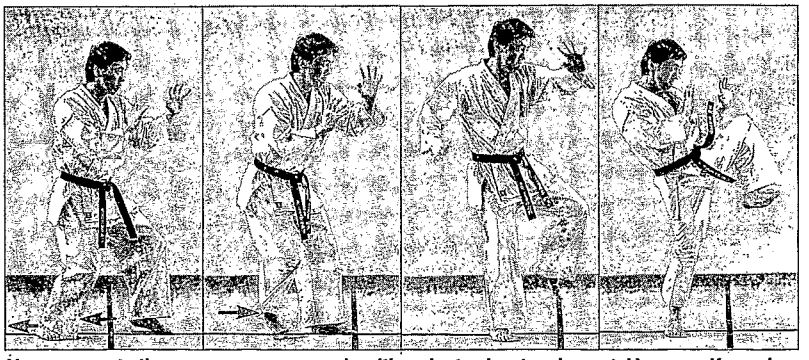
Step in with your right leg, bringing your left knee up and to the inside.

Keep up your guard, striking the knee sharply out to the side.

Simultaneously stab with the elbow.

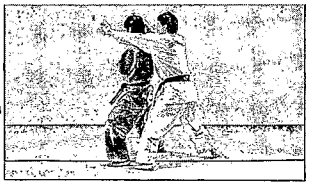
Footwork

The knee block stops your opponent's kick before it impacts. But at the same time it is confronting power with power, so you have to be able to apply enough penetrating strength not to be overcome by your opponent's momentum. The instep is the key. Don't just block with the knee. Put your whole body behind the technique. A slight backward lean in the upper body is unavoidable, but the most important thing is to make sure you put your hips into the technique.



You can create the same power as you do with an instep by stepping out. However, if you draw your *hips* too far back as you take the step you'll find it difficult to shift your body weight forward for the block, and rob yourself of power.

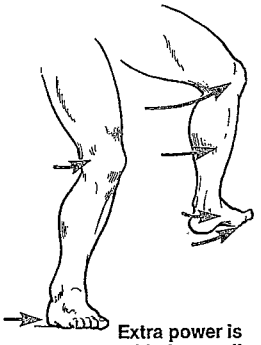
Before your opponent's kick gets going, gouge your knee into his inner thigh. As this can cause a lot of damage, block with the shin during training. To complement the knee block, use your hand to spin him inwards.



Stab with your knee from the outside inwards using the sharp twisting motion of the hips.

Roundhouse knee block

Knee block from the roundhouse knee strike. Use against your opponent's left roundhouse kick, stabbing your knee into his thigh with a kind of screwing motion. The power needed to overcome your opponent's kick comes from the sharp, compact twisting motion of the hips. Since you have to be close to him to use the technique, keep your guard up.



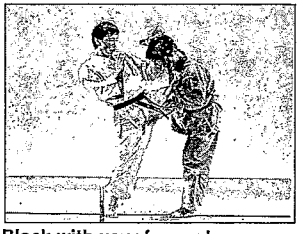
Extra power is added to all knee blocks by pointing the toes in the direction of the kicking knee. Don't overextend the knee of the pivot leg!

Against left kicks, block against his thigh from the inside.

Stabbing knee block

Knee block using the stabbing knee strike. Use as a stopping technique against the body. In response to a wide roundhouse kick, step in quickly, stabbing your knee into the groin/inner thigh area of the kicking leg. This technique relies on a fast forward shift (slide) of body weight.
(Stopping ⇨ p.124.)

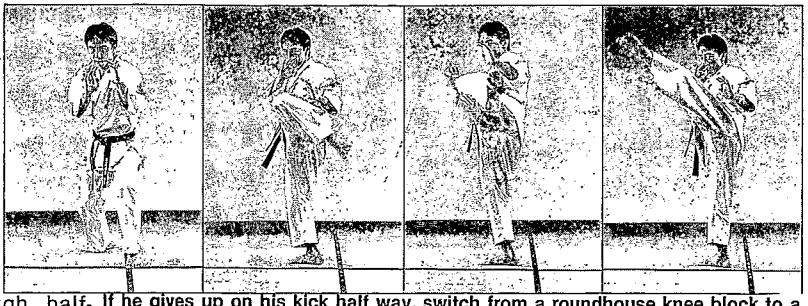
Step in sharply, stabbing your knee into him in a straight line.



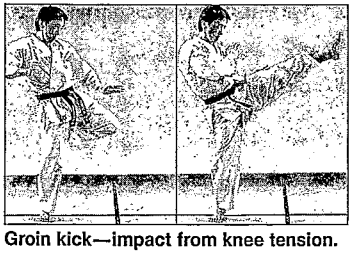
Block with your forward momentum and your pivot leg knee spring.

Switch from knee block to strike

There are so many people who begin a technique only to stop halfway through. You think that they are using it as a feint and expect a different attack to come at you, but nothing happens. The reason is simple: they can't judge timing, so they give you a chance through half-heartedness. For instance, you think the attack is a left roundhouse kick, so you raise your knee in a roundhouse knee block. Your opponent promptly gives up on his attack half way. Now, one thing you can do then is use the momentum already created through lifting your leg to switch to a roundhouse kick. From a stabbing knee block, switch to a groin kick or a front kick. You can also extend the leg from the knee block as you move, using it as a stopping technique against his leg. (In the same way you can apply it if your opponent switches from a low kick to a sweep at your supporting leg.)



If he gives up on his kick half way, switch from a roundhouse knee block to a roundhouse kick.

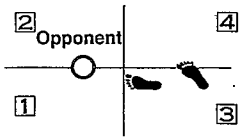


Groin kick—impact from knee tension.

The form of the stabbing knee block just before impact and the groin kick as it starts to release tension in the knee is virtually the same.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES From Knee Block

Most control techniques using the knee block are in infight situations. (In cases where the opponent retreats from the block or you push him away, range will change.) In infighting, the use of the hands to break your opponent's balance and positioning become more important.



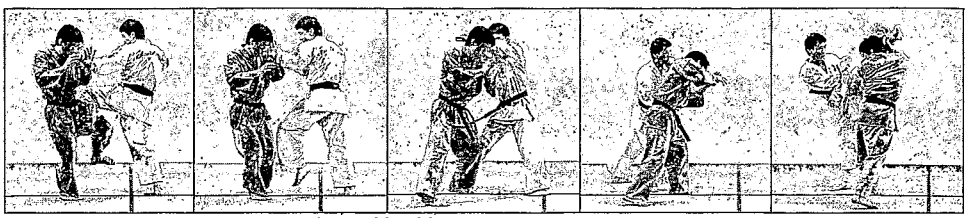
◦ Position 1 from the knee block

After stopping your opponent's right roundhouse kick with a knee block: step in with your blocking leg and pull him to get yourself into position [1], then attack him from the outside. Break his balance by pushing and pulling.

As you position, pull with your left hand and push with your right to unbalance and control him for a high kick.

◦ Position 2 from the knee block

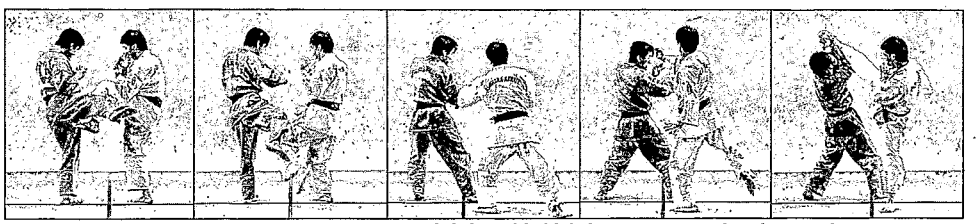
After stopping your opponent's left roundhouse kick with a knee block: as your left leg touches down, step in with your back (right) leg, pulling him around with your left outside block to place yourself in position 2, then launch your attack.



If he is too close, break his balance by pushing him away; use any kick.

◦ Position 3 from the knee block

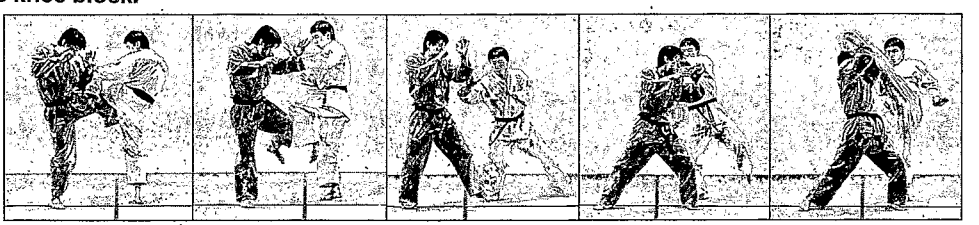
Stop his right roundhouse kick with a knee block: if he brings his kicking leg down in front, then the moment your blocking leg touches down move your right leg along line ④, and use your left hand to break his balance with an outside block. You are now in position 3.



Forward leg movement can be due to momentum left from his kick, keep your guard up for punches.

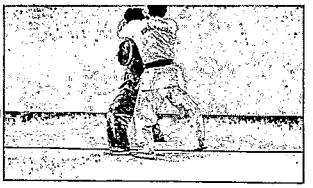
◦ Position 4 from the knee block.

Stop his left roundhouse kick with a knee block; if he brings his kicking leg down in front of him, pivot on your right leg while drawing your left leg along line 3. Shift from a left hand guard to a right outside block to break his balance. You can now attack from position 4.



If his kick beats your block, your pivot leg will become shakey, and smooth positioning will be impossible.

GROIN KICK



All kicks to and below the groin use the snap in the ankle on impact.

Grasping your belt in a natural stance...

...kick down the centerline of your body and into the target, to release tension.

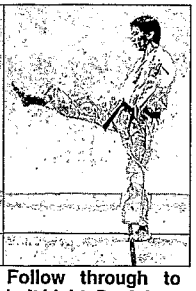
As you approach impact kick out, snapping open the knee.

Create tension by hip-twist and by bringing your heel back to your buttocks.

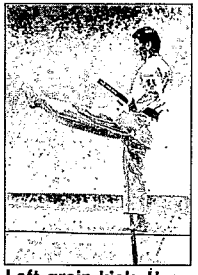
Don't kick too high; aim along the centerline of your body. Increase the speed of your kick by snapping open your leg from the knee.

By holding your belt, you develop good balance.

Kick out and up using the twist in the hips and the release of knee-spring.



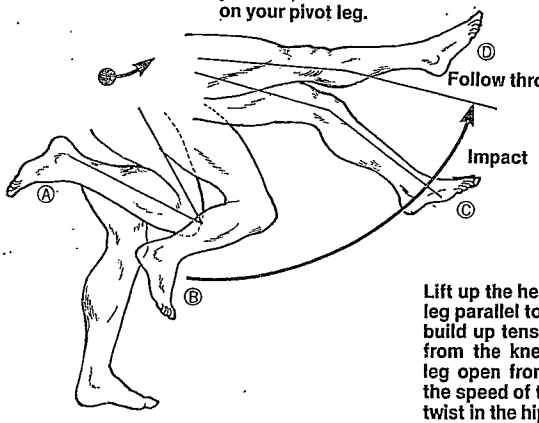
Follow through to belt hight. Don't lose your balance.



Left groin kick. Use the twist from your hips. During basic practice, don't turn on your pivot leg.

Groin kick (low front kick)

In effect, the groin kick is a front kick aimed below the waist. At the start of the kick, pull your heel right back, and kick out along the center line of your body. Keep the knee bent until just before impact, kicking along the shortest line to your target. Kick up to belt height and retract in one single, smooth action.

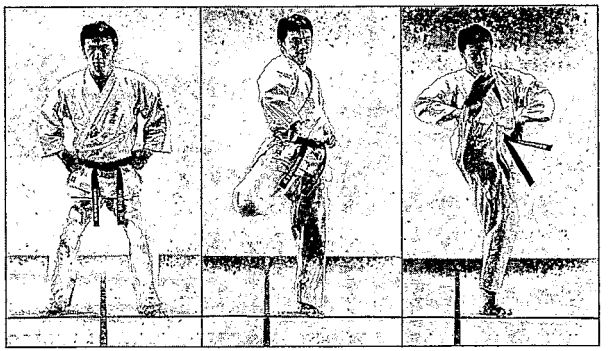


Lift up the heel of the kicking leg parallel to the pivot leg to build up tension (A); kick out from the knee (B); snap the leg open from (C). Maximize the speed of the kick through twist in the hips and the snapping action of the leg.

FRONT KICK (TRIANGLE KICK)

Front kick

This kick is carried out in much the same way as the groin kick. At impact your hips should twist through a 45°-60° arc. Kick right through with the whole foot and then pull back.
Aim for the solar plexus and follow through to chest level. For the high kick you should aim for his jaw and follow through to eye level, but first master the use of the feet and hips through low kick practice.

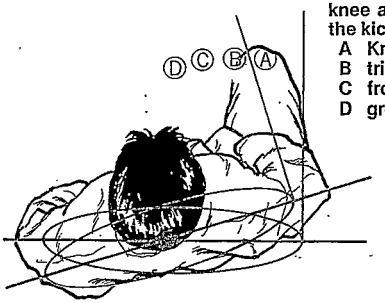


Right front kick from the natural stance—hold your belt.

Pull back your heel to create tension

Twist your hips through a 45°- 60° arc to impact.

Kick in a straight line, snapping the leg open from the knee at impact. Chin height for a middle follow-through.

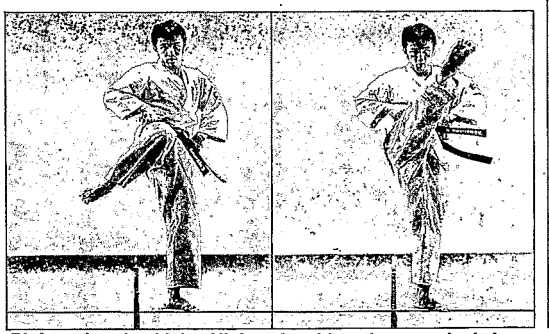


The course of the knee at the outset of the kick:
A Knee strike;
B triangle kick;
C front kick;
D groin kick

Triangle kick

This is a good practical kick which combines the speed resulting from the straight line motion of the front kick with the power from the sharp, twisting action of the roundhouse. The action is similar to the front kick, but bring the knee further out from the body, and kick inwards as you turn, increasing the twist of the hips. Front kicks which knock an opponent down in real fights are almost all triangle kicks.

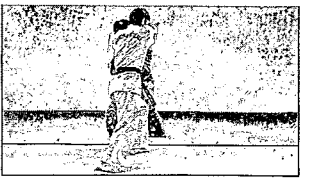
Make sure during training that you distinguish between your own front kicks and triangle kicks. Be aware of the differences between the three kicks—the front, the roundhouse and the triangle. A triangle kick is not a half-hearted cross between a front and a roundhouse kick: it is a combination of the best points of both.

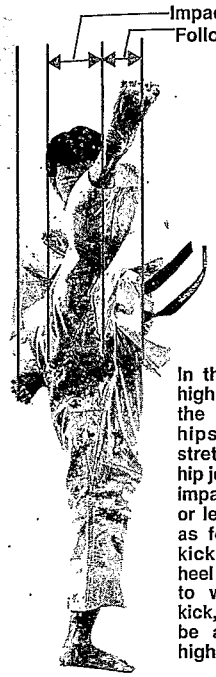


Right triangle kick. Kick from further out and with more twist than the front kick.

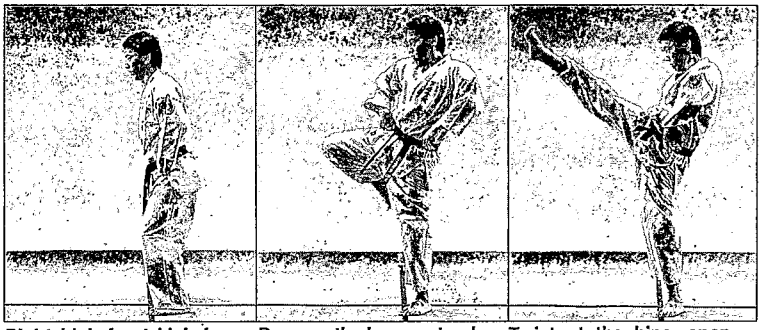
Combine the speed of the front kick with the power of the roundhouse kick.

Left triangle kick. Follow through to a point further than for the front kick. Pull the kick back quickly.

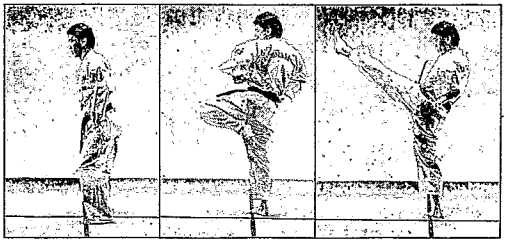




In the case of a high front kick, the twist in the hips and the stretching of the hip joint make the impact zone more or less the same as for a triangle kick. Draw the heel back enough to wind up the kick, or you won't be able to kick high.



Right high front kick from the natural stance. Draw up the knee, extending the hip joint. Twist at the hips, snap your leg at impact.



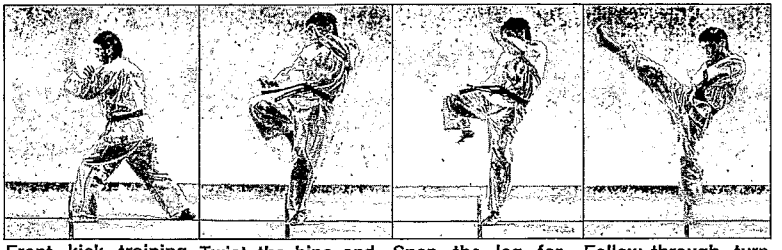
When repeatedly combining left and right kicks, always make sure you return to the correct stance in between each kick, pulling back the kicking leg in one fast, smooth motion. Take care that your movements are under control as you alternate legs.

Left high front kick. Main points are twist in the hips and pulling back the heel.

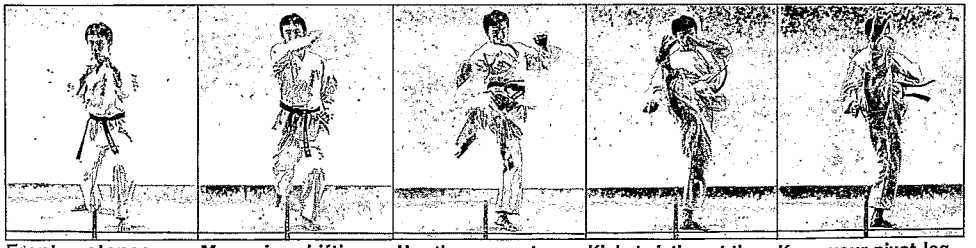
Front and triangle kicks from the front stance—training

During basic practice, while the natural stance is used to help develop speed and leg extension without using the spring of the whole body, the front kick and the triangle kick are also practiced from the front stance using the spring of the whole body.

Some think that a front kick just involves shoving your foot out in front, but Ashihara karate students must realize that the technique involves kicking diagonally towards the centerline of the body, using the twisting motion of the hips.



Front kick training from the front stance. Twist the hips and shift your weight. Snap the leg forward to impact. Follow through, turn the pivot leg 90°



Front stance—keep up your guard over your face. Move in shifting your body weight forward onto the pivot leg. Use the momentum from your weight shift to bring up your knee, extending your hip joint. Kick, twisting at the hips and snapping your leg forward from the knee. Keep your pivot leg stable throughout.

GROIN KICK · FRONT KICK

USE IN A REAL FIGHT

Kick in along the centerline of your body with speed and extension

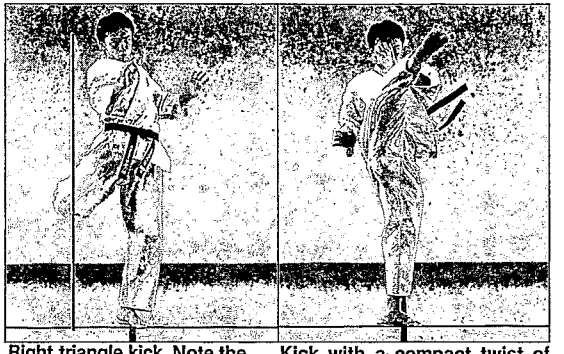
In order to master the use of the groin and front (triangle) kicks it is vital in basic practice to understand the special features of the kick. The front kick, as well as being a fast, straight kick is also the one with the most reach.

Think of a punch as a knife and a roundhouse kick as a sword. The front kick approximates to a spear. If your opponent comes at you with a punch (a knife in the analogy), you can stop him before he reaches you by countering with a front kick (a spear). If he comes at you with a roundhouse kick (equivalent to a sword), while his kick is still making its way around, you can kick straight at him with your front kick (spear), felling him with superior speed and reach.

• Front and triangle kicks in a fight

Right front kick from a fighting stance. The knee should come out as far as your shoulder. Twist sharply to kick through your target.

Take care over the angle of the hip-twist. Extend the knee of your pivot leg in the direction of impact, taking advantage of spring.

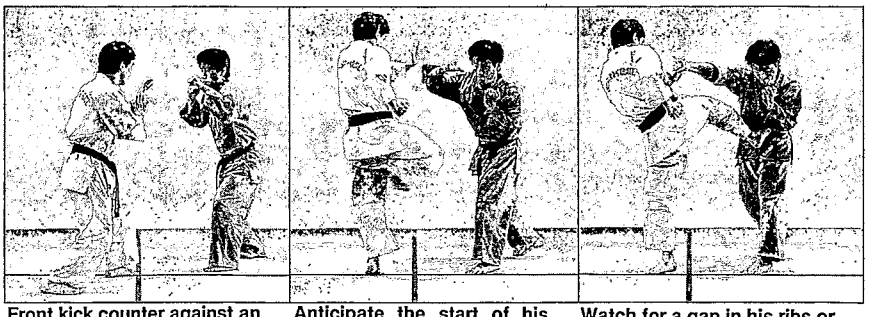


Right triangle kick. Note the difference in knee position compared to the front kick. Kick with a compact twist of the hips (45°- 60°).

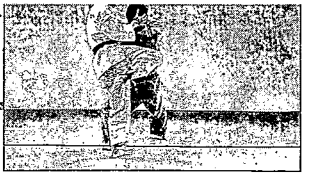
In a real fight, due to footwork and your opponent's movements, the direction, angle and distance of your target will be changing continually, so you *must* be able to employ front, triangle, and roundhouse kicks effectively in response to these changing conditions. The reach of your front kick can be increased when fighting through the twisting motion of your hips, and the step (slide) in of the pivot leg.

• Front kick in response to a punch

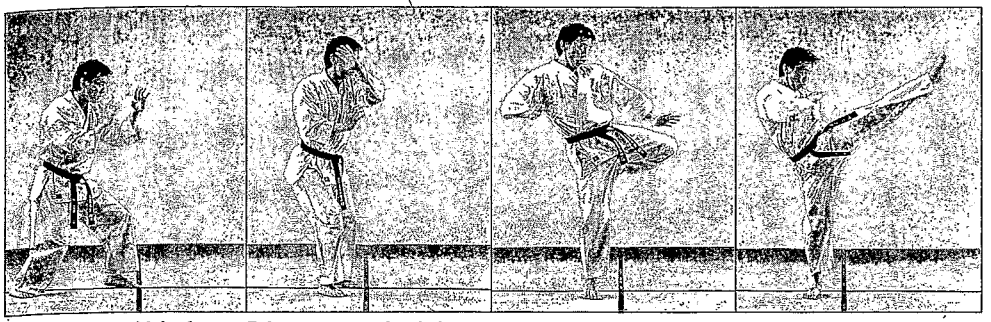
In a real fight, a front kick can be used as a counter to a punch—anticipate it and time your move to coincide with the start of his. It is safest to unleash your kick at the same time as your hand block.



Front kick counter against an opponent's right punch. Anticipate the start of his technique and kick while keeping up your guard. Watch for a gap in his ribs or body and kick through.



• Left triangle kick



Left triangle kick from fighting stance.

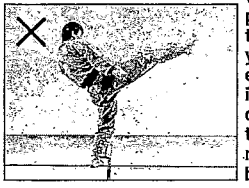
Bring up your back leg, and put your weight on it as you twist your hips.

Use the momentum to kick.

Snap the leg open from the knee. Don't lean back.

For the front kick, you must shift your body weight forward. If you don't, and lean over backwards, your kick will be completely ineffective, leaving you in a powerless position where you could easily topple. Your next attack will be late.

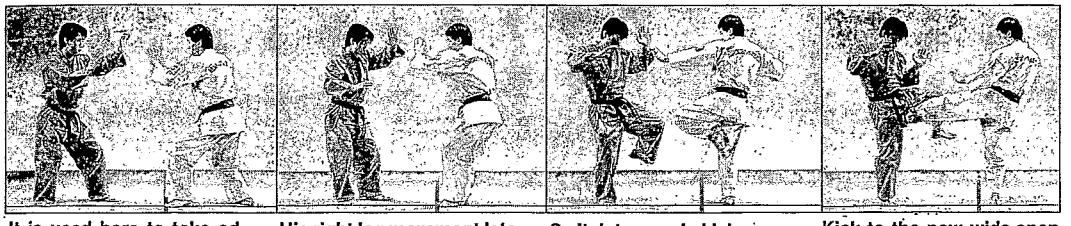
A common mistake



Split-second timing

The effectiveness of the front (as well as groin and triangle) kick depends upon accurately judging the right moment for the counter. Particularly in the case of the groin kick, split-second judgement is vital because it is a stopping technique. The groin kick is particularly effective to strike at the gap created by an opponent when he lifts his knee for a roundhouse kick.

• Groin kick



It is used here to take advantage of the gap he opens trying to block your left kick with his knee.

His right leg movement lets you anticipate his left knee block to your kick.

Switch to a groin kick.

Kick to the now wide-open groin area, twisting at the hips.

• Position first, then kick

Positioning yourself before you kick enables you to stop your opponent's attack and control him in safety. The groin kick doesn't have to be only from the front: you can also kick from the side and from behind your opponent.

In practice, aim for the inner thigh. When you position yourself, if you misjudge the range, you leave yourself open to kicks and backhand strikes, so get it right!

Against a left front kick, step out and block low to position yourself.

Use the low block to lead his kicking leg down where you want it, then attack with a groin kick.

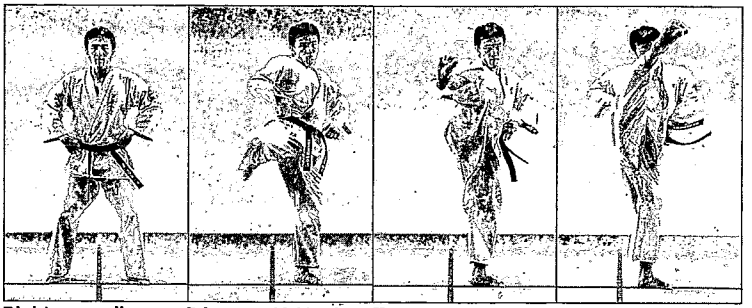
Kick him before his kicking leg touches down. Once you're behind him, he's open to anything.

ROUNDHOUSE KICK

The roundhouse kick—kick with the ball of the foot in basic practice

When you train, kick from the natural stance with the ball of the foot, aiming at the waist. Lead with the knee of the kicking leg, making full use of hip-twist and spring in the knee of the pivot leg. Bring your knee up to the side of your body, then kick up towards the centerline.

Keep your knee bent until just before the moment of impact, then release the spring in both legs to kick in. The ankle of your kicking leg should follow through past the centerline of your body (at long range it will be the ankle/instep, at short range the shin). In basic practice aim for the body. Kick as though punching the ball of your foot through the target, thus extending the leg to its full. Keep the heel of your pivot leg on the ground in practice, and limit the twisting of the pivot leg so you can first really master the use of the kicking leg.

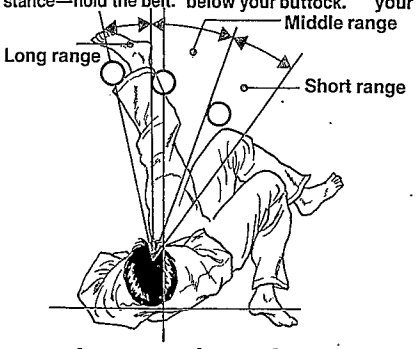


Right roundhouse kick from natural stance—hold the belt.

Bring your kicking-leg heel back diagonally below your buttock.

Twist at the knees and hips and kick to your centerline.

Kick with the ball of the foot. Limit the pivot leg twist.



• Impact point and range

The illustration shows long range. You can strike at different ranges by using the knee. When you are actually kicking your opponent, turn your knee inwards, keeping it bent.

• Tension and spring

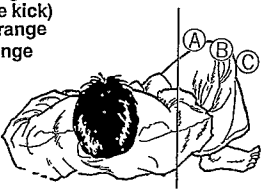
Bring your knee up to the side of your body then kick towards the centerline. Build up spring by bringing your heel back to your buttock, then as you twist at the knees and hips, release the spring in the knee of both the pivot leg and kicking leg on impact.

• Start low

If you try to kick too high as a beginner, you are going to lose your balance. Start off with low kicks to master the use of the knees and hips correctly, then gradually learn how to kick high *and* keep your balance.

• Line of the knee

A Long range (Triangle kick)
B Middle range
C Short range



The start position and course taken by the knee varies depending upon the range involved. The closer you get, the further out you need to swing the knee.

Left high roundhouse kick from natural stance.

Roundhouse kick training from the front stance

As with the punch, to master a powerful, useful roundhouse kick you should train from the front stance. In contrast to the roundhouse from the natural stance, from the front stance the body weight shifts from the back leg to the front leg; this creates huge momentum and a big swing in the hips you can use for really dynamic kicks. Master the timing of a smooth transfer of weight and balance and the release of spring from the hips. There is a difference between dynamic kicking and over-kicking: make full use of the spring in your knee and the action of the hip joint. After follow through, twist your hips to bring the kicking leg back sharply.

Right roundhouse kick training from the front stance. With sharp hi-twist open out the leg from the knee and hips. Pivot leg should be at 90°. Keep your heel on the ground.

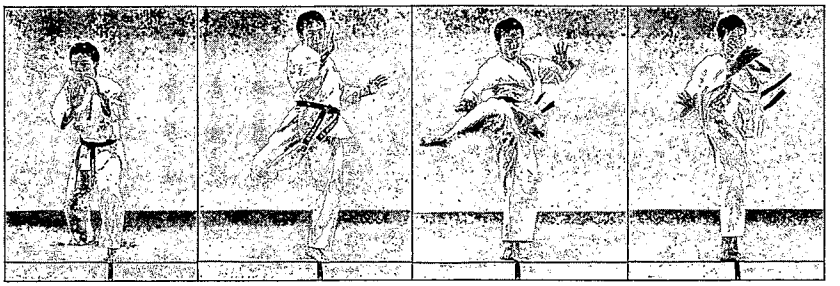
The main point to note about this kick from the front stance is the forward weight shift. Twist your hips sharply at impact. After follow-through pull the kick back quickly, either down in front of you or, using the recoil movement, pulled back to its original position.

Birds-eye view of a roundhouse kick from front stance. Start with a two hand guard. Shift your weight quickly forwards. Think about hip-twist, knee position and tension. Use hip-twist and snap the leg open from the knee to impact; kick through the target. Twist the upper body back, keep balance and use the reaction motion to pull back the leg.

• Raise and spring

Using the weight shift onto your leading leg to raise the knee, pull your heel back to your buttock; keep that angle until the moment before impact when you release the spring as you twist.

ROUNDHOUSE KICK USE IN A REAL FIGHT

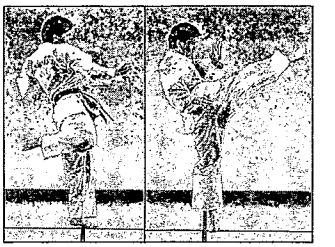


Right middle roundhouse kick from fighting stance.

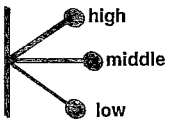
Snap your leg open from the knee as you twist at the hips to the point of impact.

Shift your weight onto your pivot leg, bringing your knee around from the outside.

Kick to pierce his body with the ball of the foot. Guard the face.



Twist the pivot leg through 90°, using the spring in the knee of your pivot leg and the twisting motion of your hips (60°- 75°) to kick through.



It is the middle kick which has the greatest reach. Adjust range through the hips and and the pivot leg.

Concentrate power at the moment of impact

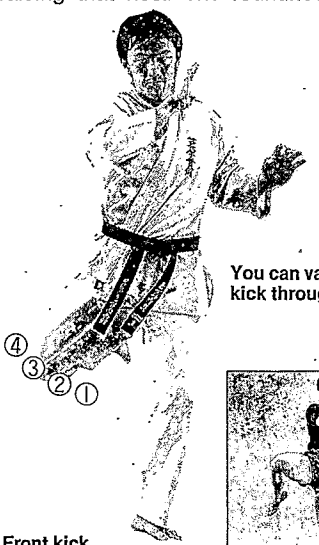
Master speed and balance in basic practice. Learn dynamic hip movement through kicking out of the front stance. In a real fight, the height reach and speed of a kick can be upped by turning the pivot leg and by raising that heel. The roundhouse kick is generally divided into three in fight situations—middle, high, and low. Train so that you can kick effectively to all three heights.

Middle roundhouse kick—use the ball of the foot for basics. High roundhouse kick-use the ball of the foot or instep.

Increase the reach of this kick in particular by extending the knee, raising the heel and twisting the pivot leg.

Low roundhouse kick—use the shin. There are various ways of using the low kick: circular motion, stabbing motion, pushing against the opponent's leg, kicking upwards (to the inner thigh etc.) or as though cutting away the opponent's legs (cutting kick, sweep to pivot leg etc.)

Start off by mastering the basic middle kick (using the ball of the foot), then master the low kick with its various applications. For all kicks, pull back the heel to touch the back of the thigh in order to create maximum tension; release the spring at the moment of impact to put speed and power into the kick. There are many students who mistakenly concentrate on the finishing position of the kick, imitating good kickers. Don't copy the follow-through! Copy the kick itself from the moment before impact to actual impact. Watch how good kickers build and release spring during the kick, and master it yourself. The twist at the hips for the middle roundhouse kick should be between 45°- 60°; 75°- 90° when using the kickbag; 75°- 90° for the high kick. As you shift your weight onto your pivot leg, using the momentum thus created, twist at the knee and hips and kick through the target.



You can vary the type and height of your kick through the angle of your knee.

① Front kick
② Spinning low kick
③ Middle round house kick
④ High kick

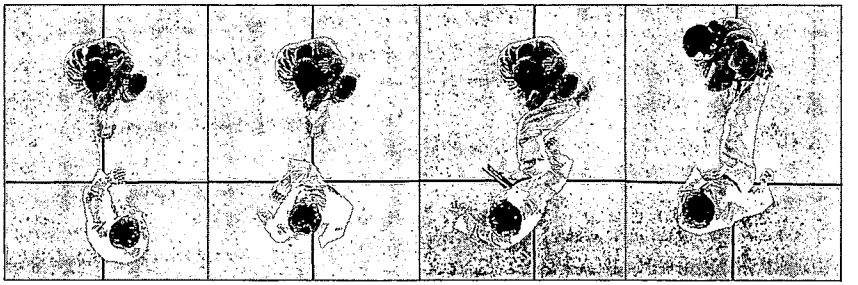
Course for the knee for middle roundhouse kick.

Twist, retaining tension in the knee.

Open at the knee just before impact.

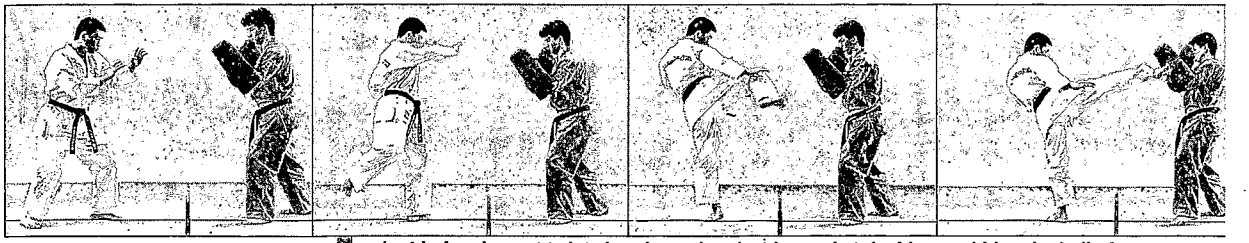
Mitt training—kick to hit with the turn of the body

The use of the knee and hips is not learnt just through sparring and shadow boxing, but also through the use of the kick bag and mitt. It will help you to learn how to bring your leg down in different places and move accordingly. In a real fight, you'll have to kick with a bigger, sharper twist in the hips.



Mitt training for a right middle roundhouse kick. Shift your weight forward to the pivot leg, kick off from the ground with hip-twist. Bring the knee in more than you would for a practice kick. As you follow-through don't overextend the knee.

• Middle roundhouse kick (using the ball of the foot)



Just before impact twist sharply on the pivot leg and at the hips, stabbing the ball of your foot into the mitt.

The basic point to remember about the roundhouse kick is the use of the ball of the foot. Aim for the middle of the body, striking at the right angle. Half-kicks which don't use twist at the hips and spring in the knees may be used as linking techniques, but can't cause much damage.

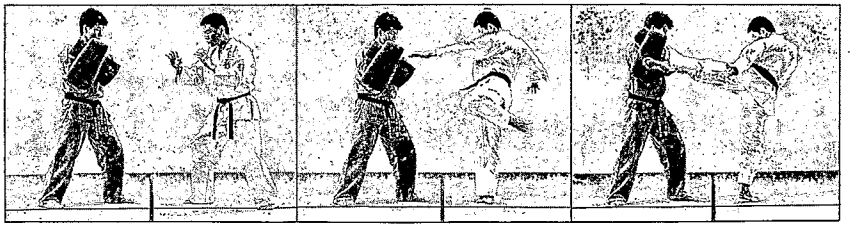
• Middle roundhouse kick (using the instep)

This kick is used at close range (as is the shin version). Kick flexibly like a whip (the knee takes an in-course traveling in a straight line when you want to kick your opponent away).

Twist of the pivot leg and hips must be sharp to make the kicking leg elastic.

• Left middle roundhouse kick (using the in step from southpaw stance)

You must be able to execute all kicks with both left and right legs. Train so that you can kick with your left leg either preceded by a fast forward step with your right (back) foot or from southpaw stance, as smoothly as you can kick with your right out of an orthodox stance.



Don't just concentrate on polishing up your best leg: you must be able to kick powerfully and quickly with both left and right.

HIGH ROUNDHOUSE KICK (HIGH KICK)

USE IN A REAL FIGHT

High Kick

The high kick is used in a fight from either the side or rear position, and is aimed at the back and sides of the head or the face. Bigger movements are involved than for the front and low kicks, so that positioning, control of your opponent to prevent counterattacks and techniques to destroy his balance are all particularly vital. Many students worry too much about the height of the kick and lose their balance as a result. Concentrate first on the stability of your pivot leg. If the kick hits home on the face or head, it can cause a great deal of damage, but the pivot leg is wide open throughout, so the risks are also great.

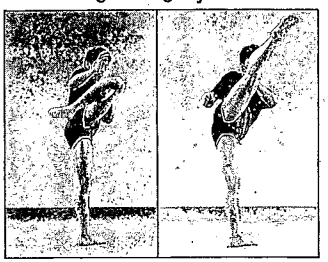
Right high kick from fighting stance. Both hands are guarding.

With body weight on the pivot leg, swing your knee around.

Maintain knee tension as you twist on your pivot leg.

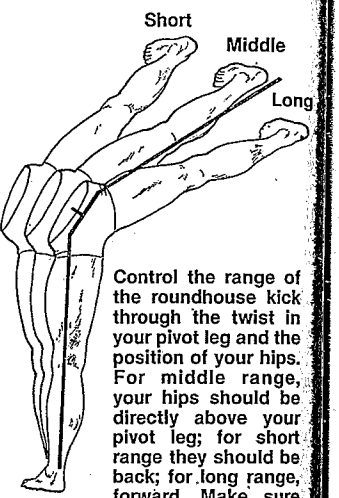
Extend the pivot leg as your kick hits.

Key to the follow-through: pull the leg back quickly.

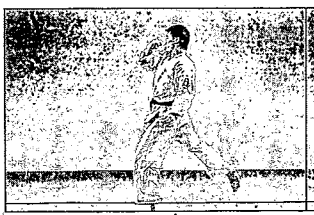


Hold the knee tension until just before impact.

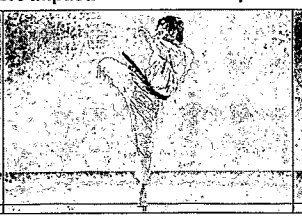
The power of the high kick comes from the opening out and twisting of the hips just prior to impact. The twisting motion is greater than for a middle kick—you should extend the hip joint and release the tension in the knee in a single motion.



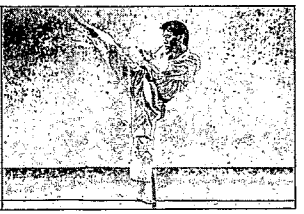
Control the range of the roundhouse kick through the twist in your pivot leg and the position of your hips. For middle range, your hips should be directly above your pivot leg; for short range they should be back; for long range, forward. Make sure your pivot leg is stable.



Move and use the momentum to shift your weight onto the pivot leg as you extend your knee...

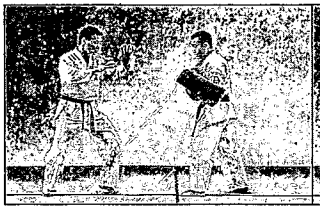


Bringing up the knee, twist at the hips and open out the hip joints.

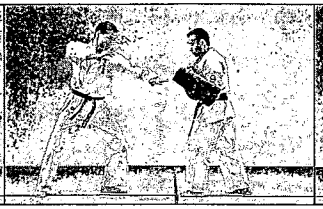


Lift the heel of your pivot leg to impact while turning and opening the knee. Don't tilt over.

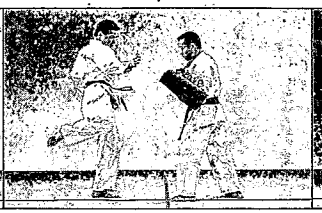
• Mitt-training—middle roundhouse to high kick (one-two combination)



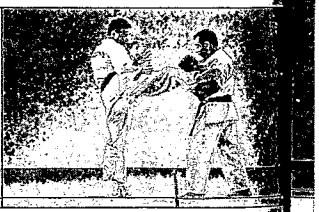
Middle roundhouse high kick combination.



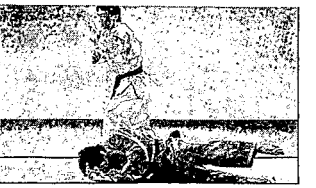
Judge the distance and position of your target, execute a right middle roundhouse kick.



Make sure that your first attack hits accurately.



As your kick impacts, think where to bring the kicking leg down.



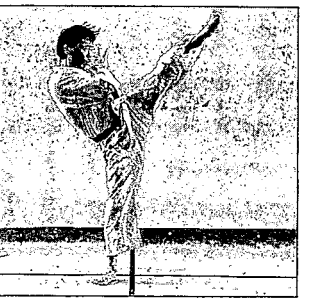
• Step in with the back leg for a left high kick

An inability to kick with the left leg, even though the right is good, is due to an inability to shift weight smoothly from the back (right) leg. Bring your right leg up into position quickly and shift your weight over it, transmitting the momentum you thus create through the hip-twist into the kick. If these movements are not smooth, you'll end up losing balance. Narrow the distance without your opponent knowing it.

Left high kick from fighting stance.

Bring up your back leg, shifting your weight on to it.

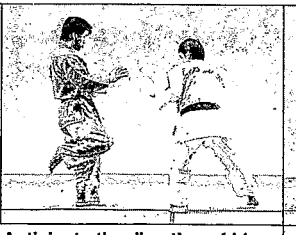
Make use of the momentum to raise your knee, twisting at the hips.



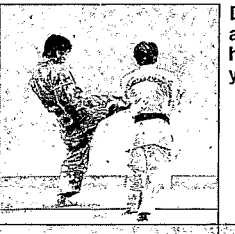
Carry out each motion in an instant, combining the momentum to kick powerfully.

• High kick from side position 1.

Use of right high kick against a right front kick from side position 1.



Anticipate the direction of his kick; move your right foot along line 4 to take up the side position.



Destroy his balance with an outside block, leading him as you kick off with your right leg.

To hit accurately with a high kick, you must first break your opponent's balance with a good block, taking up a safe position while using your footwork to create instant spring for a kick. The whole process must be lighting fast. Keep your pivot leg stable the whole time, shifting your weight smoothly and twisting at the hips. If your pivot leg is unstable, you'll have no chance of kicking powerfully. The larger the motion of the kick, the sharper and more compact the movements need to be.

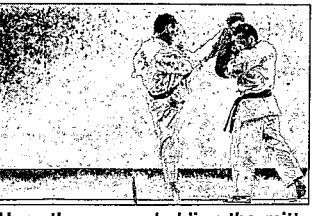
Start your high kick before his kicking leg reaches the ground.

Hit him on the right side of the face with your right high kick.

Use the recoil of your kick to bring your foot down outside. Don't forget your guard.

As it touches down, kick off with the left for a left high kick.

You must kick without disrupting momentum.



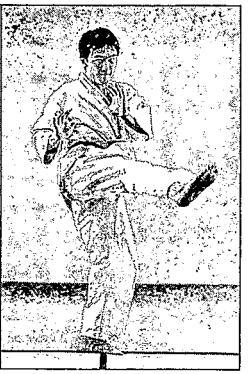
Have the person holding the mitt move around, and change the position and rang of your kicks.

LOW ROUNDHOUSE KICK (LOW KICK)

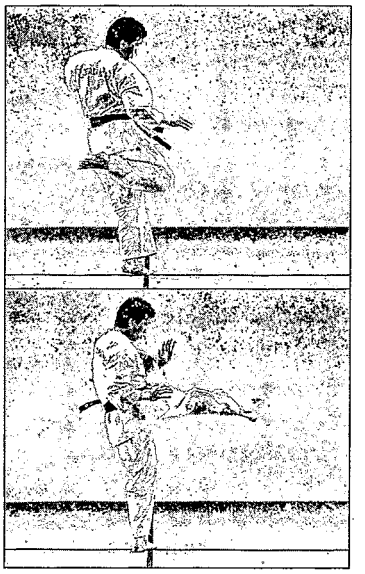
USE IN A REAL FIGHT

Right low kick from fighting stance.

Twist sharply at the hips, jamming your knee inwards.



Keep your pivot leg stable, putting your weight behind the kicking leg.

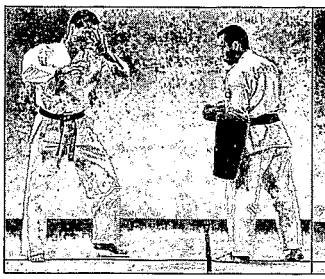


Since speed is so vital, spring in the knee created through a compact twisting motion becomes more important.

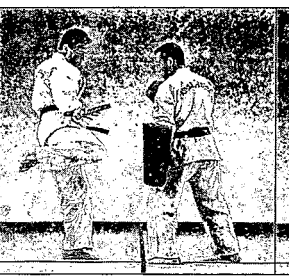
This is probably the most frequently used kick in fighting. Needless to say, it can be used as a technique to fell your opponent with a single blow in its own right, but is also often used as a linking technique to lead into highly destructive techniques such as the high kick and the back roundhouse kick.

The low kick is an excellent example of the Ashihara karate adage "fell him from low down and close in". To put it another way, you can be more certain that a kick aimed low at the parts of your opponent's body closest to your own (legs, thighs) will hit home than is the case for high kicks, which have a larger motion. So it follows that you have to learn how to cause damage with the low kick.

There are various ways of excecuting the low kick, but the standard form is the basic middle roundhouse kick to the lower half of the body. Combine hand techniques and moves designed to break your opponent's balance with the turn and direction of the knee in order to adapt it to all situations.



When training for the low kick on the mitt, swing your hips around wider.

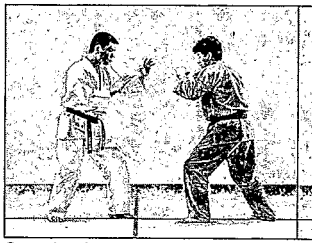


Lead with the knee, jamming it in even more than for the middle roundhouse kick.

Don't lose your balance on the recoil.

• Spinning low kick to the pivot leg.

In executing control techniques in a street fight, position yourself in response to the opponent's kick and aim to kick the closest, most effective target. When he comes at you with a high kick, step in and block, then kick away his pivot leg while his kicking leg is still in mid-air.

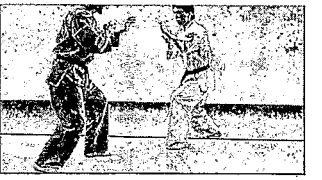


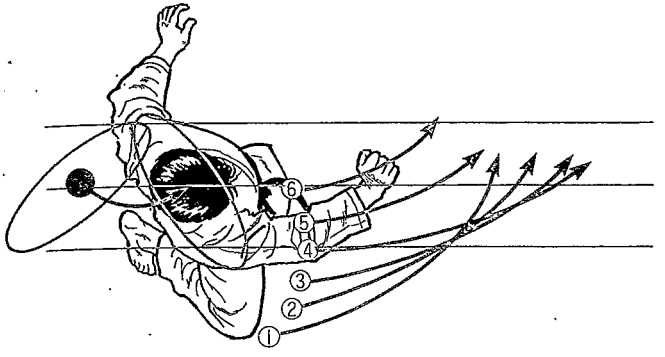
Step back and kick low to the pivot leg in response to his right high kick.

Judge where his high kick is going, stepping back to absorb impact.

KICK)

All low kick angles and uses can be applied to the middle roundhouse kick





• The course of the knee for different roundhouse kicks

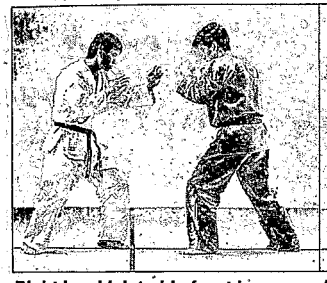
You can distinguish the different kicks from the starting position and course taken by the knee. The illustration shows the position of the knee for a short range roundhouse kick, but if you change the starting position as illustrated, you will be able to execute a variety of kicks.

① Short range roundhouse kick (low kick)
② Middle range roundhouse kick (low kick)
③ Long range roundhouse kick (low kick)
④ Front kick (triangle kick, low kick)
⑤ Low kick, inside low kick (⇨ p.113)
⑥ Cutting kick (⇨ p.114)

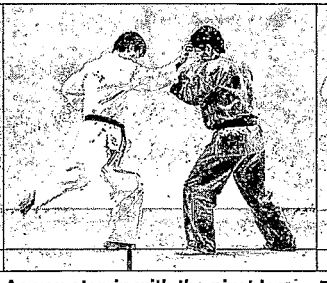
The course of the knee alters depending upon the height of the kick and the forward weight shift. This diagram shows typical patterns.

• Spinning low kick

The spinning low kick has the same characteristics as the middle roundhouse kick: swinging in from the outside, but rotating the knee at a lower level, you should first master kicking at the portion of your opponent's body closest to you—his front leg. Kick him below the hips, using your shin or instep. Twist sharply at the hips, giving the kick enough spring. You can increase power by stepping in with your pivot leg (slide step). While executing the low kick, don't forget to use your hands, pushing, pulling or guarding your face so you don't get punched. Also take care not to let your line of sight focus solely on his legs, or you won't see his punches coming.

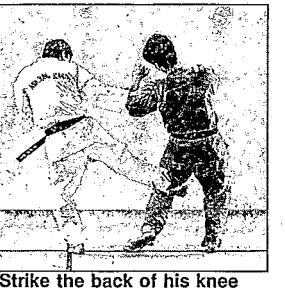


Right low kick to his front leg.

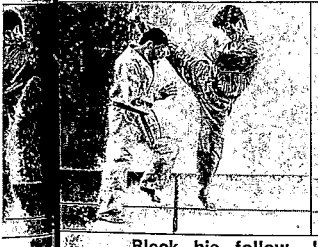


As you step in with the pivot leg, twist sharply at the hips and kick off from the floor.

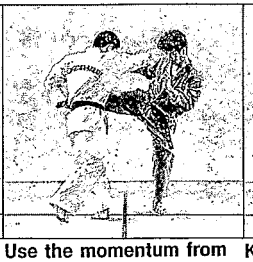
Twist the knee, jamming it in as you release the spring for the kick.



Strike the back of his knee with your shin/instep while breaking his balance with your hands.

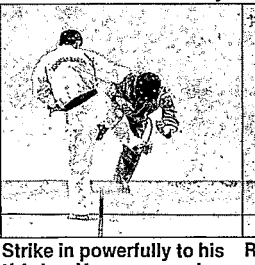


Block his follow-through with a high block to break his balance.



Use the momentum from your step forward as spring for your right low kick.

Kick hard, using your hands against his upper body to wreck his balance.



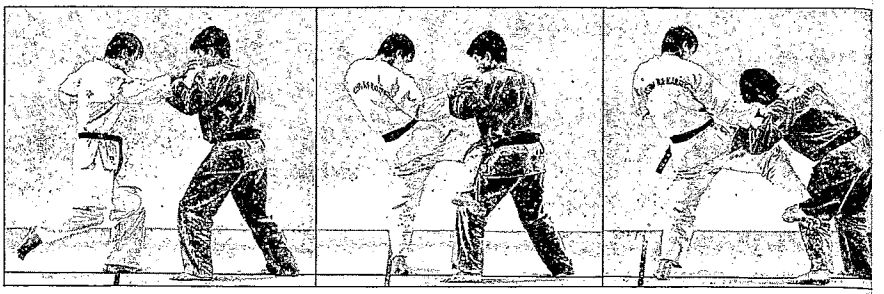
Strike in powerfully to his thigh. You can also punch.

Return to your stance without losing balance, then kick again.

LOW KICK USE IN A REAL FIGHT

• Pushing low kick

In a fight the low kick can be used in a number of ways, depending on circumstances. The pushing low kick is used in infighting. First distribute weight over both knees, and then kick as though pushing with the shin. Depending upon the direction in which your opponent is facing and the angle of the kicking leg, you can either push against one of his legs (1), or take out both legs from the hips (2). Concentrate power at the moment of impact, knocking him away as you follow-through.



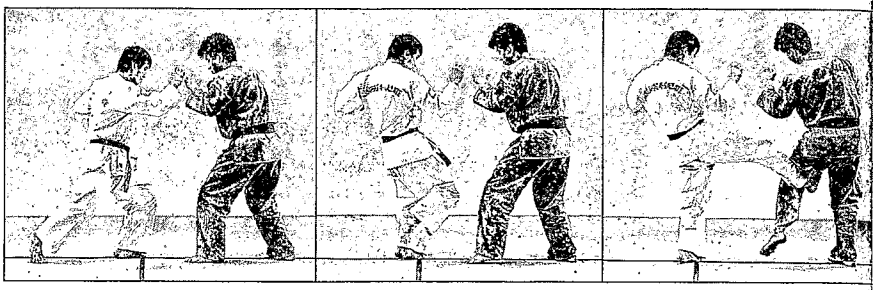
Step in sharply, bringing your knee up diagonally, swing it in a straight line for the low kick.

Shift your hips forward, your knee at the angle for stabbing it in, then open up the leg and kick with the shin.

Pull his body diagonally to the side with your right hand as you kick his front leg.

• Upward low kick

This kick involves twisting at the hips, bringing the knee inside and kicking diagonally upwards in a straight line. It is used in fights to kick the opponent's inner thigh after you've spun him inwards with a kick or block, or as an inside low kick to the inner thigh of his kicking leg. It is basically a counter kick, so it relies on a fast, compact twisting action at the hips. Kick when your opponent's weight is over his front leg.



Upward low kick to his front leg. Cut upward through the calf.

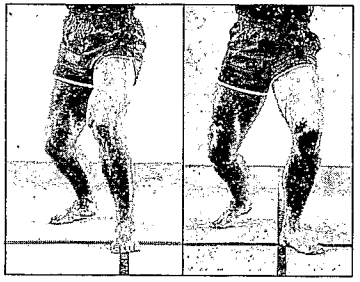
Don't let your knee swing out too much; kick diagonally up the middle.

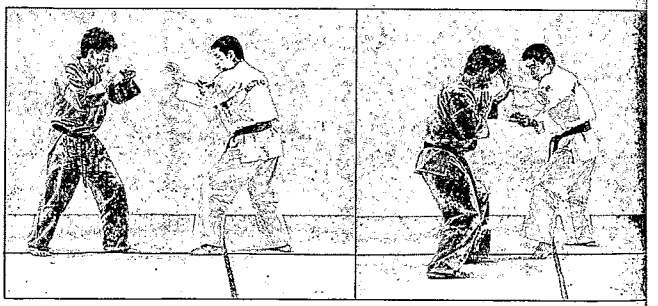
Kick up into his calf or the back of his thigh.

• Use of the pivot leg in response to an absorbing step

If your opponent takes a quick step to absorb your kick, turn the toes of your pivot leg in the direction in which he is moving and kick. By turning the pivot leg, you give your hips fuller scope for movement and alter the point of impact. Watch out for his stopping kicks.

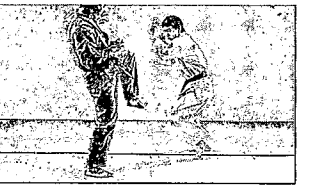
Judge which way his absorbing step is going and turn your toes outwards to build the tension in your hips which will allow you to kick powerfully. When he begins to move to the left with his right back leg, you can also kick his left leg.

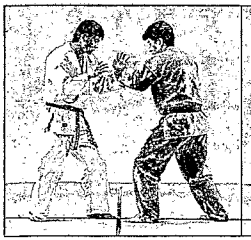




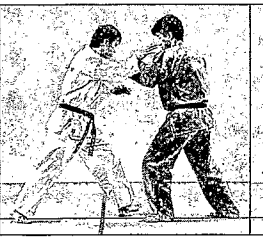
As you start to launch a kick with your right leg, he takes an absorbing step (or moves in with his right back leg).

Turn your toes in the direction of movement and launch your kick.

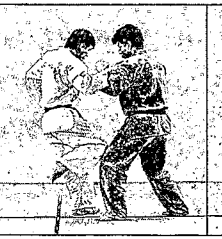




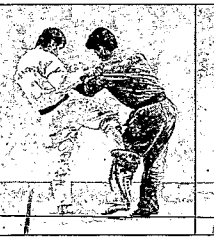
Lighting fast low kick pushing up against both his legs.



Step in quickly to make up the distance as he steps back.



Impact in to the side of your opponent's body.

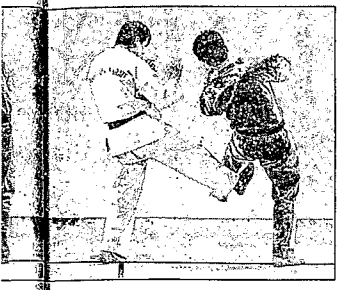


As your kick impacts, pull his upper body inwards, breaking his balance.

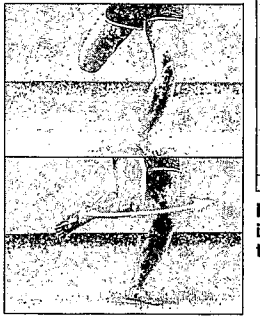
This is a useful kick when his legs are close together.

• Low inside kick

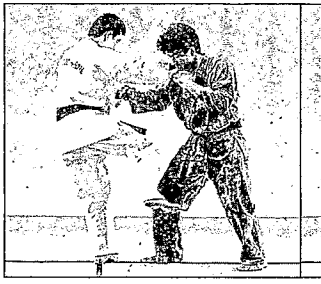
This kick is often used as a linking technique during control techniques. Kick upwards at the inner thigh before his kicking leg touches down, or just as he brings it down in front of him. From that point link up with a more destructive technique.



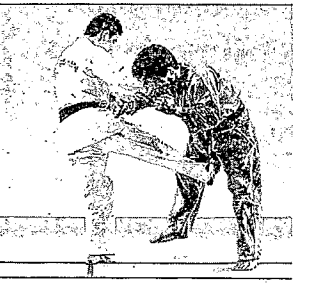
If you spin him inwards with the kick, felling him is simple.



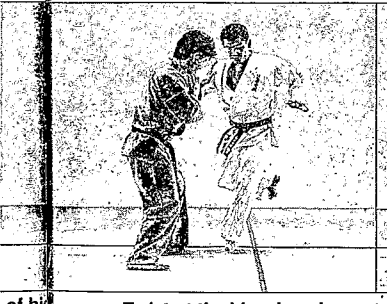
Course of the knee during the low inside kick. Kick diagonally upwards one knee's width to the outside of the pivot leg.



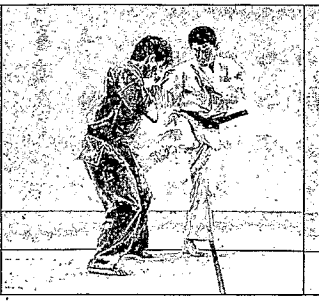
In a fight, kick up through the inner thigh the instant his leg touches down.



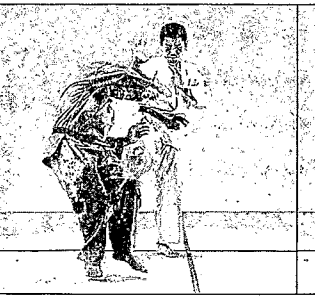
Since you come very close, keep up your guard and break his balance as you kick.



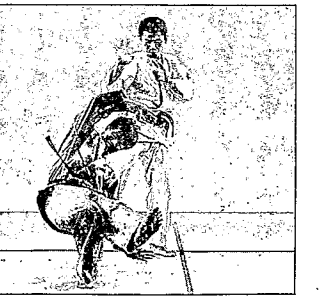
Twist at the hips, keeping your left knee stable. Watch out for his stopping kicks.



With the increased spring in your hips you can hit him in his new position.

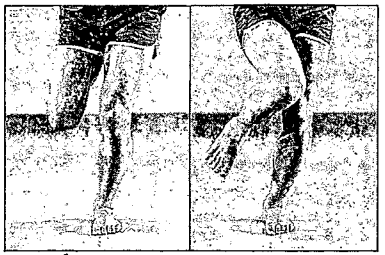


If you let your knee drift out, you won't have the power to make the kick effective.



After kicking through your target, watching your balance return to original stance (you can also follow up with another attack).

CUTTING LOW KICK USE IN A REAL FIGHT



Course of the knee during the cutting kick. Twist at the hips, the knee of the kicking leg almost rubbing against that of the pivot leg, then kick with the knee as a pivot.

Cutting kick—attack from the closest range possible

This kick is used to cut away your opponent's ankles from under him. Attack his ankles from the outside using your own ankle for the strike. If you kick away his supporting leg, you can fell him easily. Twist at the hips, launching the kick as though rubbing your knees together, at impact swing your leg from the knee like a pendulum to cut upwards. In a real fight, kick sharply using the swing in the hips when your opponent's legs are close together, or at the moment when his kicking leg touches down.

•Cut at both legs.

When your opponent brings his back leg forward in preparation for a kick with his left leg and thus brings both legs together, or when he takes a half step back to create the same conditions, at that instant step in sharply and cut up through his legs. As you step in, watch out for his counter punch.

Cutting kick at both legs.

Aim for the split-second when he steps back and brings both legs close together.

Control his punches, step in quickly and cut.

Put the momentum of your step into kicking upwards and cutting away his legs.

Kick as if to hook his legs up.

• Cutting away his kicking leg.

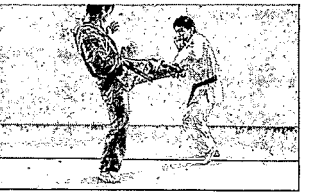
Block your opponent's kick, breaking his balance; then at the moment his kicking leg touches down, cut away the ankle of his kicking leg. Use your hand block to control his kicking leg and bring it down where you want it. Instantly calculate where the best position to bring his leg down is, then kick.

Cutting kick against a left front kick from a back leg instep.

Take the side position, stepping with your right leg, block low and follow up with a right punch.

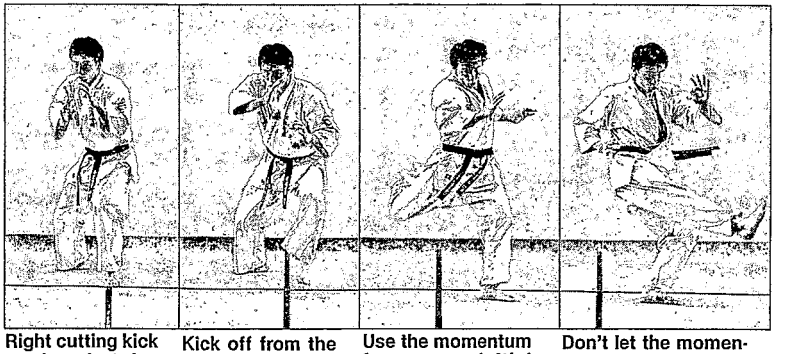
Control his kicking leg, bringing it down where you want it, then kick.

Since he will go down head first, hold his uniform for safety.



Cutting away the pivot leg.

The cutting kick is often used to cut away the pivot leg of your opponent's high kick. Anticipate the direction of his high kick, stepping in (zig-zag step) as it starts, then leap inside and kick sharply up with a cutting kick. The course of the knee changes depending on your footwork and his kick, but swing the kick a little wide utilizing the spring in your hips created through your footwork.



Right cutting kick to the pivot leg from a left zig-zag step.

Kick off from the ground with your right leg, stepping in with your left.

Use the momentum from your initial kick off; shift your weight forward and kick.

Don't let the momentum unbalance your pivot leg. Don't forget to keep your guard up!

• Cutting away the high kick pivot leg

A kick to the pivot leg of a left high kick.

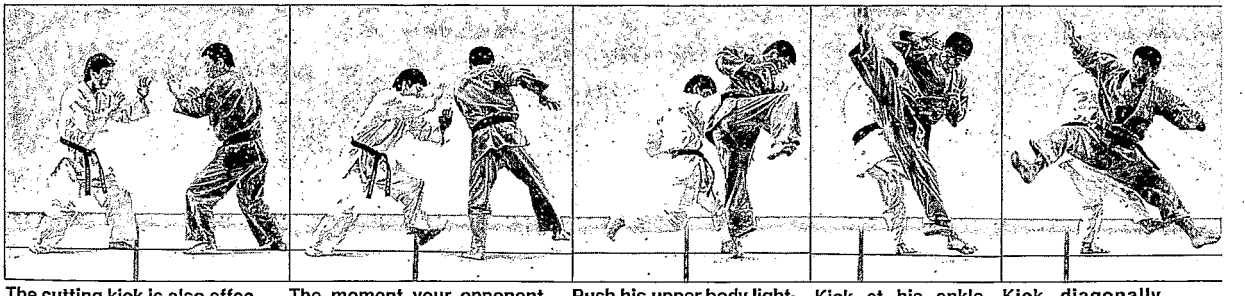
Anticipate a left high kick is coming from the forward movement of his back leg.

As his kick starts, quickly kick off with the right leg while stepping in.

As your left leg touches down, kick. Use a right handsword and elbow as guard.

As you kick, use your hands to unbalance him.

• Cutting away the back roundhouse kick pivot leg



The cutting kick is also effective against a back roundhouse kick.

The moment your opponent begins to spin, step in.

Push his upper body lightly with your hands, break his balance, then kick away his pivot leg.

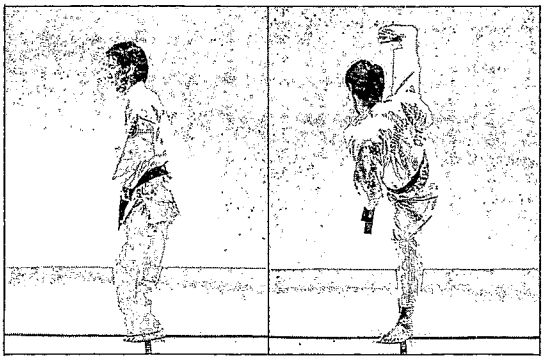
Kick at his ankle (Achilles tendon).

Kick diagonally upwards at an angle of about 45°.

HIGH SIDE KICK

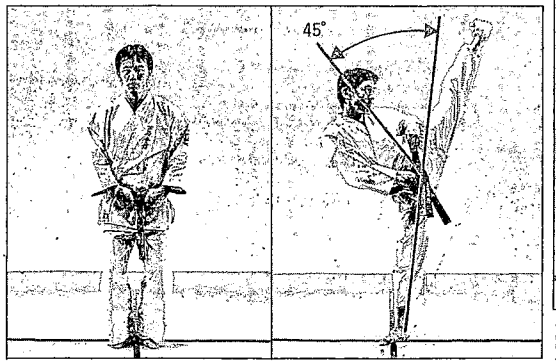
High side kick—(stretch)

The high side kick is a stretching exercise used as preparation for the side kick, the back kick, the back roundhouse kick and the hook kick. Stand with both heels touching and swing your leg directly upward to the side. Pull back your toes to kick with the heel, working your hip joints. You can lean back up to 45° (the ideal is 30°) but don't let your body lean forward. If you get into the habit of leaning forward, your kicks will lack power and you make it easy for your opponent to kick you.



Right high side kick from the heel-together stance. Lower your center of gravity slightly.

Kick out from the heel, opening out your hip joints and swinging the kick straight up to the side.



From heels-together stance, bend your knees a little while lowering your hips. Use knee-spring to kick.

Kick high, pulling your leg up from the hips. Allow your body to lean back up to 45°.

Strike up the centerline of the body with the heel, keep your hips flexible and your pivot leg stable.

Don't let your upper body lean forward; lift the kick directly up to the side following the centerline of your body. If your hip joints are stiff, your foot will wobble back and forth. Train so that you can do two or three kicks to the same height each time. Keep hold of your belt and don't cheat by using kick recoil.

Stretching the hip joints with a partner. Stabilize yourself by holding onto a rail or something and have your partner push your leg straight up, to loosen the hip joints. Stretch every day without fail, even if progress is little more than 1mm a day.

SIDE KICK

Kick directly to the side, the heel extending along the line of your body. At the start of the technique bring your knee up close to your body, maintaining tension until impact. Simultaneously kick out with the knee and the heel. Use both the tension created by bending the knee and the tension in the knee of your pivot leg to kick hard.

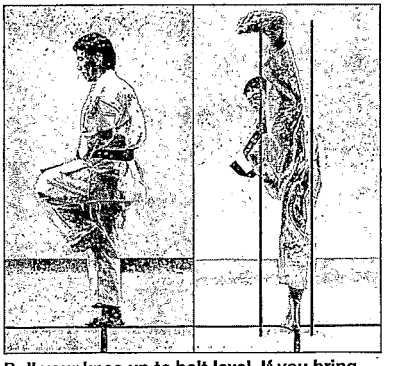
You must be aware that if you don't pull up the knee of the kicking leg properly, your kick will lack power. This is particularly true when you are close to your opponent: without first pulling up your knee you won't be able to kick at all. Even if you do manage to launch some kind of a kick, there will be no spring in the hips, and your kick will be totally without power. After kicking, pull the leg back quickly to the same raised-knee position.

From the heels-together stance, bend your knees slightly to create spring.

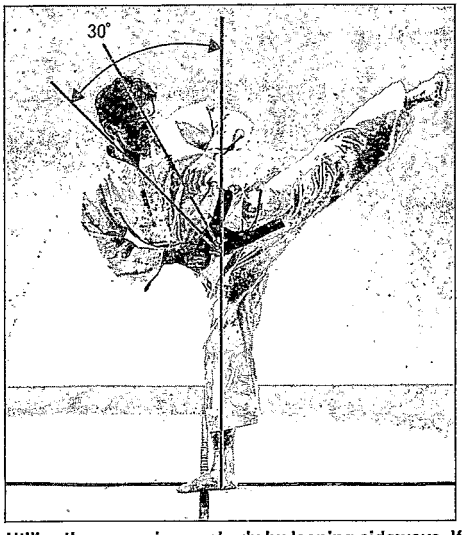
Pull your knee and heel inwards, building spring in your hips.

Kick out simultaneously with knee and heel, opening out your hip joints as you kick.

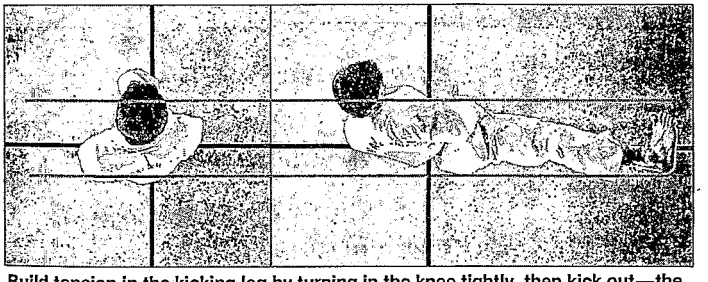
Power comes from spring at the knee of the pivot leg and tension in the other knee. Beginners should start by kicking low.



Pull your knee up to belt level. If you bring it up too far you won't be able to kick high. Pull the knee in close and kick in to the target from the side.

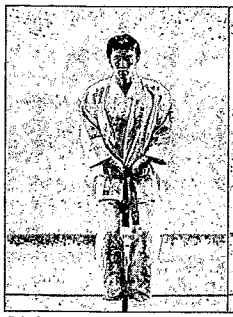


Utilize the power in your body by leaning sideways. If you lean too far, you'll lose all the power of the kick. Put the strength of your upper body movement into the kick. Increase its reach by turning on the pivot leg.



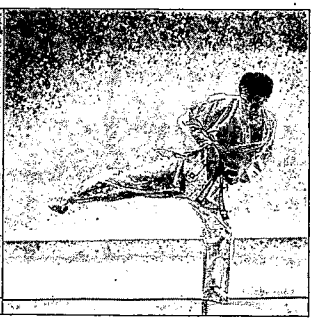
Build tension in the kicking leg by turning in the knee tightly, then kick out—the twist in the knee will alter the direction of the kicking foot. The kick should be executed in a single, fluid, straight-line strike into the target, with no wobble.

JOINT KICK

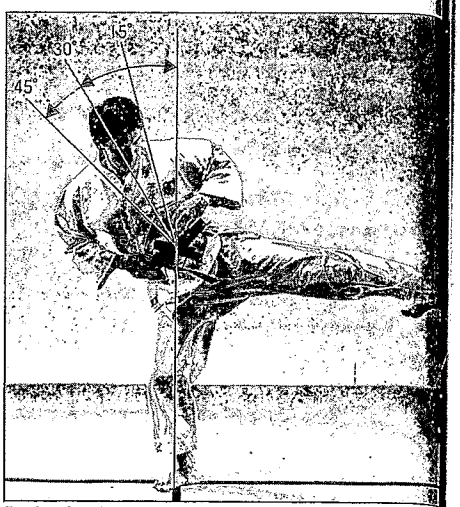


Right joint kick from heels-together stance. Bend your knees slightly.

Pull up the knee to build tension.



Lead with the knee, kicking with the heel diagonally downwards.



During basic practice your body should lean from between 15°-30°; anything up to 45° in a fight, depending on the circumstances.

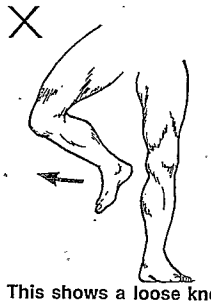
Joint kick

This is a low level application of the side kick used against your opponent's leg as it touches down after a high kick, or against the knee of his pivot leg. It is a very useful, practical kick, with a number of applications. It is often used as a counter, when speed and timing become vital, Remember not to open out the knee of your kicking leg too far; launch the kick from your knee and hip simultaneously.

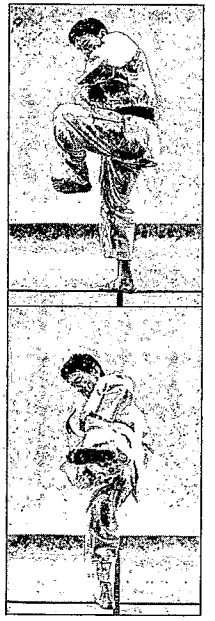
Side kick

Low side kick/joint kick

The bend in the knee for the side and joint kicks is as shown in these diagrams. If you raise your knee above belt level, you won't manage a high side kick. In the case of the joint kick, raising the knee high creates power for downward thrust. If the knee is loose and without tension you won't be able to kick either hard or high.



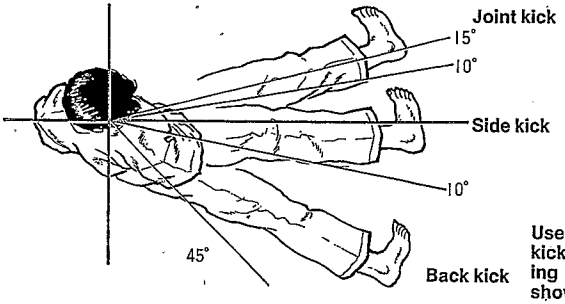
This shows a loose knee with no tension whatsoever.



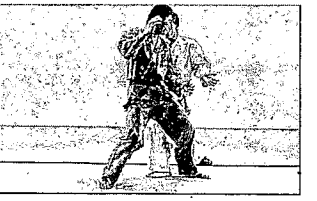
Use the spring in your pivot leg, kicking from the bend in your kicking leg. Impact from the position shown in the bottom photo.

• The side, joint and back kicks—angle of attack.

The back kick can be used in a fight to strike an opponent from behind with the turn of the body, but the kick is basically the same as the side kick, the angle from the central pivot of the body being around 45°. For the most powerful kick in a fight think of between 10° forward and 10° back for the side kick, and 15° forward for the joint kick.



SIDE•JOINT•BACK/KICK



• Side kick from fighting stance.

The side kick is used in a real fight while you use footwork to move forward. Use the momentum from your forward movement to kick straight and fast. Increase reach by turning the pivot leg, and increase speed by utilizing the spring in the pivot leg.

Left side kick from fighting stance.

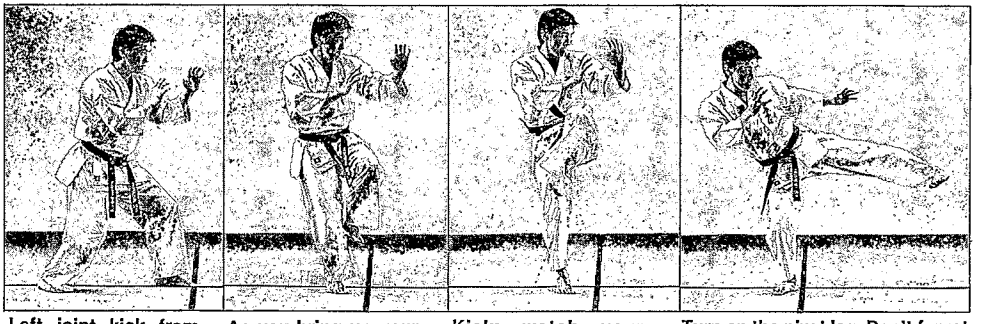
Step quickly forward with your back leg, using the momentum to launch your kick.

Swap legs, shifting your weight onto the pivot leg.

Kick, putting all your weight behind it.

• Joint kick from fighting stance.

Since the joint kick is a downward kick aimed at your opponent's leg, it has greater speed and power than the side kick. Judge where your target is going to be, then kick diagonally downwards. For best effect kick to just below his hips, to the knee cap, the side or the back of the knee joint.



Left joint kick from fighting stance.

As you bring up your back leg, raise the left knee to wind up for the kick.

Kick; watch your balance!

Turn on the pivot leg. Don't forget your guard.

• Back kick from fighting stance.

The back kick is used against an opponent standing directly or diagonally behind you. Turn quickly on your front pivot leg and kick directly backwards in a straight line in the same way as for the side kick. If you don't twist the upper body, and simply kick back with only the foot, the kick will be useless. Twist your upper body sharply, leading with elbow, and put the resulting momentum into your kick.

Right back kick from fighting stance.

Pull up your right knee and twist, leading with your right elbow.

Twist backwards, kicking hard.

Kick in a straight line, then twist, returning to your original stance.

SIDE KICK•JOINT KICK—APPLICATION

Back roundhouse kick

This kick uses the spinning motion of the hips to kick. In the same way as for the roundhouse kick, the spring in the knee is vital. The height and range of the kick are also controlled in the same way as in the ordinary roundhouse kick.

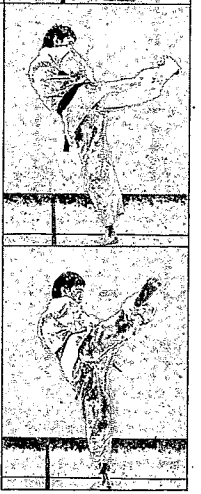
First twist the upper body, leading with the elbow. Pull the elbow around hard, giving yourself a sharp twist of the upper body. Load the momentum from this twisting motion into the kick. While you're training, make it clear to yourself where your kick is going to impact. Begin training for the kick by practicing the twisting motion—knee tensed, pivot leg stable—without actually kicking.

Right flying back roundhouse kick from the fighting stance. As you turn, bend at the knees, building tension. Lead your twist with the right elbow, jumping off from the ground. Pull your elbow around, twisting sharply.

Flying back roundhouse kick

This is basically the same as the back roundhouse kick, only with a jump. Use the centerline of your body like the pivot of a spinning top and jump, without letting your pivot leg wobble; kick as you spin. If your pivot leg is shaky, your spin will lack speed and your balance will go when you land, making it easy for your opponent to fell you. Jump small to begin with.

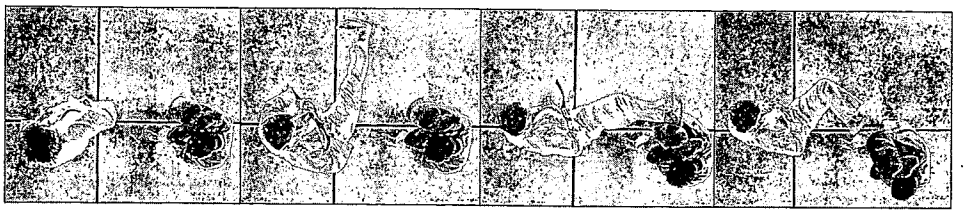
Turn with the elbow digging at the air.



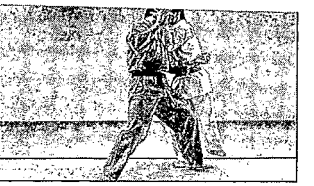
Lead the spin with your right elbow. Impact with the knee pulled in and tense. Kick with the heel.

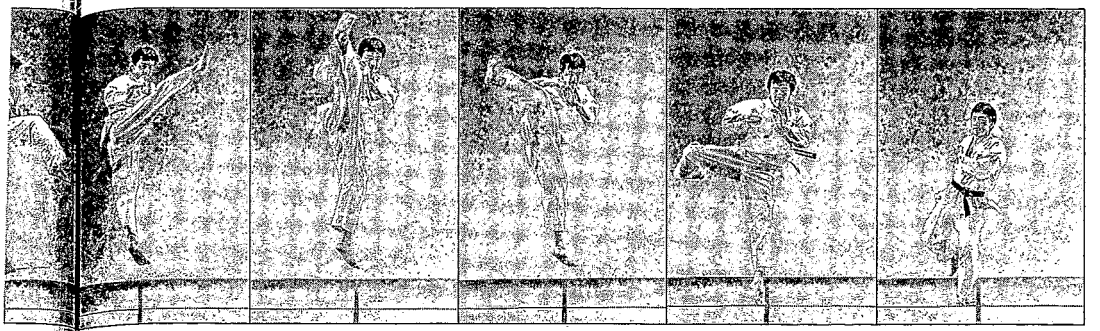
• Back roundhouse kick—training

Firstly, make sure your pivot leg is stable and the twist in the hips smooth. Kick from the stability of your supporting leg and the twist in the upper body led by your elbow. Turn and stop without kicking and check each point of the technique; learning the timing of the move. Practice with both left and right.



Back roundhouse training with mitt. Use the tension in your knee, and turn the leg. Impact with the momentum of the spin into you heel. At impact, close at the knee, cutting into the target.





elbow twisting

Just before impact open out the leg.

On impact bend the leg, cutting around and through.

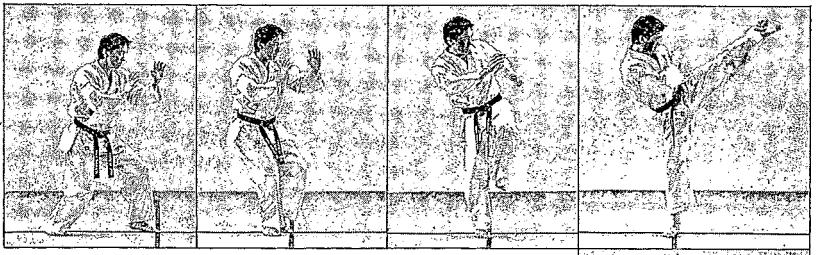
Use the momentum of your spin as the power for your kick.

Turn through 360°, bringing the kicking leg back.

He will try to hit you just as you land, so keep your balance.

Hook kick

The start of the kick is the same as that for the side kick, then with your knee drawn in, swing your knee forward. Keep your hips loose and describe a circle as you kick.

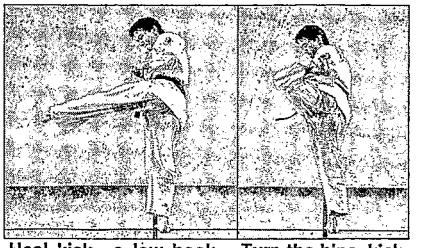


Left hook kick from a right instep. Finish in the same way as for the side kick.

Heel kick

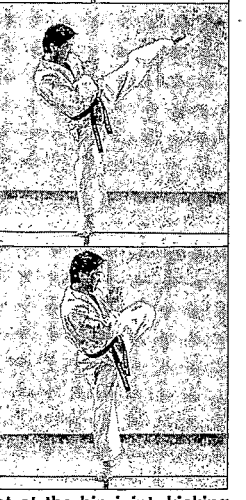
This is best described as a low level hook kick. Start in the same way as for the hook kick, but on impact turn, cutting in with the kick parallel to the floor.

It can also be used to kick up and and into an opponent standing behind you, bringing the heel up backwards into his groin (or his face if his guard is down).

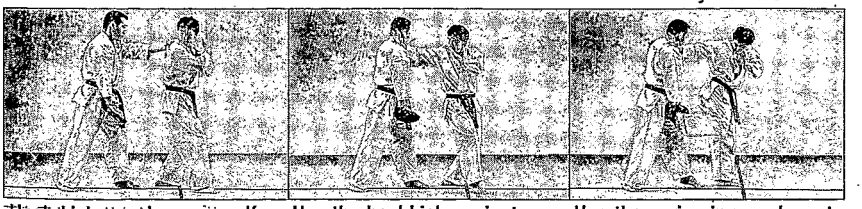


Heel kick—a low hook kick.

Turn the hips, kicking with the spring in your knee.



Twist at the hip joint, kicking diagonally backwards in the same way as for the back kick. Cut into your target with the heel.



Heel kick used as a self-defense technique aimed at the groin.

Use the heel kick against an opponent behind you, as you strike in with a handsword.

Use the spring in your knee to jam the kick upwards into his groin.

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SIDE KICK•JOINT KICK USE IN A REAL FIGHT

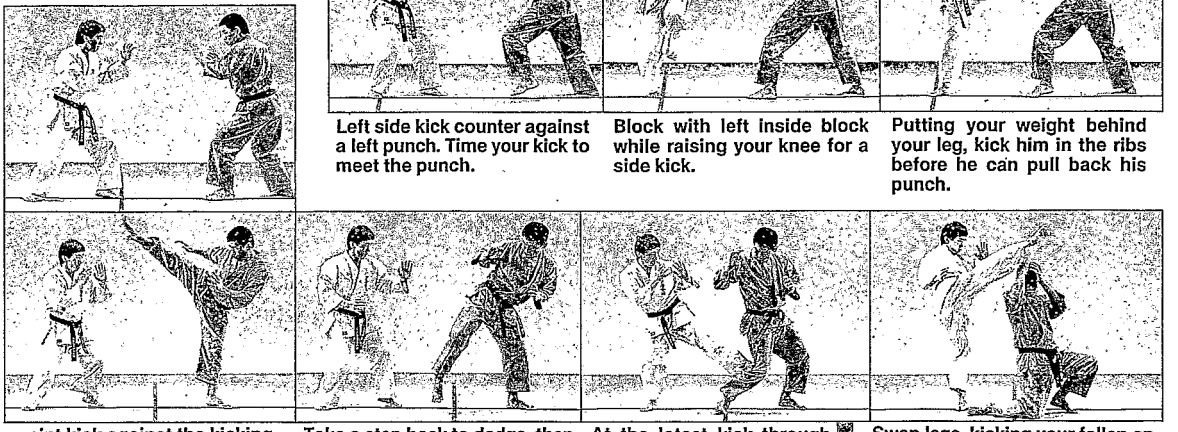
• Side kick against a punch

Left side kick counter against a left punch. Time your kick to meet the punch.

Block with left inside block while raising your knee for a side kick.

Putting your weight behind your leg, kick him in the ribs before he can pull back his punch.

• Joint kick (against his kicking leg.)



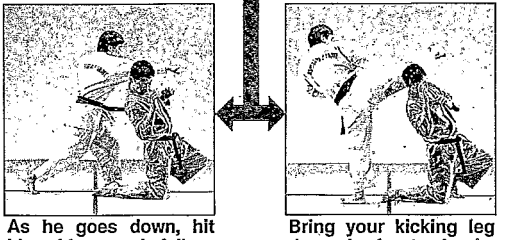
Joint kick against the kicking leg of a right high kick.

Take a step back to dodge, then joint kick his kicking leg as it touches down.

At the latest kick through the back of the knee as his foot hits the ground.

Swap legs, kicking your fallen opponent with a high kick counter.

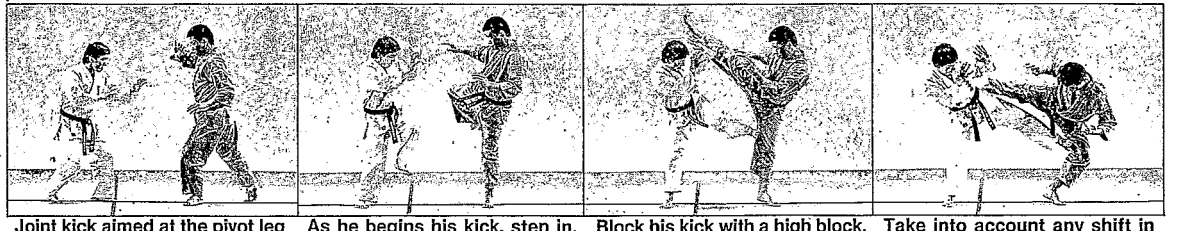
So far the back kick, the back roundhouse kick, the hook kick and the heel kick have been introduced as practical applications of the side kick and the joint kick. But in a real fight, the side and joint kicks can also be used as catching and stopping kicks. In other words, while they can be used as *offensive* techniques in a fight, they also fill a *defensive* role. As a counter, they can be used as blocks or linking techniques, while at the same time possessing enough power to fell the opponent in one blow.



As he goes down, hit him with a punch, followed by an elbow strike or roundhouse kick.

Bring your kicking leg down in front of you, moving into a right back roundhouse kick.

• Joint kick (against his pivot leg)



Joint kick aimed at the pivot leg of his right high kick.

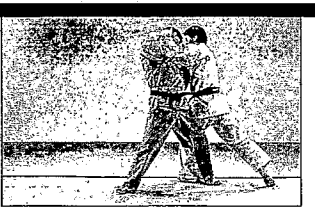
As he begins his kick, step in, bringing your arms lightly in to your body.

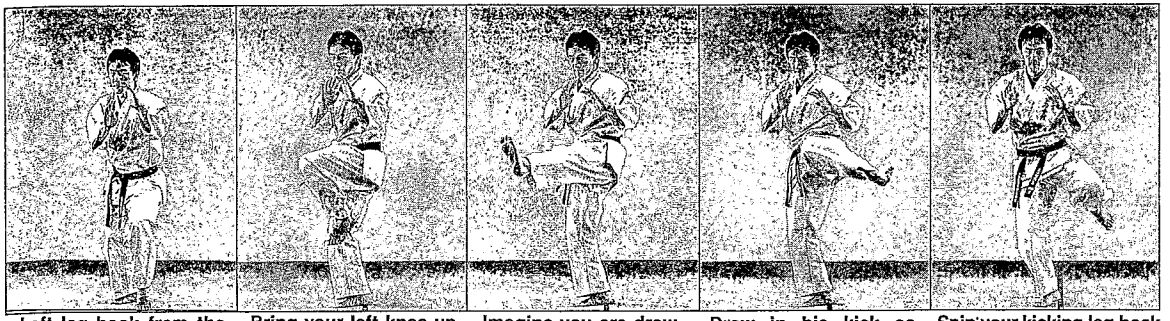
Block his kick with a high block, sliding your pivot leg forward and kicking at his pivot leg.

Take into account any shift in his pivot as he kicks.

LEG HOOK

HEEL KICK AS A BLOCKING TECHNIQUE.





Left leg hook from the fighting stance.

Bring your left knee up to the inside and start to twist, leading with the turn in the knee.

Imagine you are drawing his kicking leg in. Don't lift the leg too high.

Draw in his kick as though you were performing a low hook kick.

Spin your kicking leg back to position yourself for follow-up techniques.

Leg hook

This technique is both a low hook kick and a heel kick used as a block. Use it against an opponent's low kicks to the inner thigh. In orthodox style, use your left foot to block his left kick to the inner thigh (it will be opposite in southpaw stance). Draw your opponent's kick in, hooking it using the knee/shin portion of your leg.

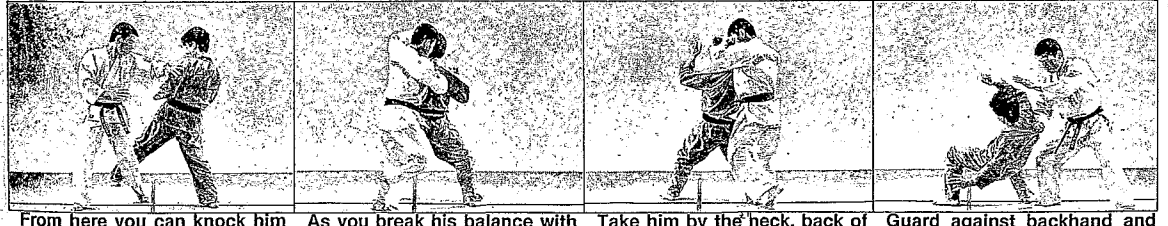
• Leg hook against a left low inside kick

Use your front leg to hook his kicking leg from the outside.

Draw his left low kick in, turning the knee to block.

Don't forget to guard against punches. Don't raise your leg too high.

Hook his leg with your calf, pulling on his leg to break his balance before your foot lands.



From here you can knock him down by pulling him and cutting his leg away.

As you break his balance with your hands, step behind with your back (right) leg to back position.

Take him by the neck, back of the head or collar, drawing back your left leg and twisting at the hips to throw him.

Guard against backhand and elbow strikes and take up position.

STOPPING JOINT KICK AS A BLOCKING TECHNIQUE

Stopping kick from fighting stance.

Put the three techniques together when you practice.

Kicking leg stopping.

Body stopping.

Pivot leg stopping

A block that combines attack and defense

A stopping kick is a joint kick adapted for blocking. It is used mainly at middle range as a counter against kicks and punches, and is aimed at their initial movement. Kick with your heel (in training use the flat of your foot). In orthdox style use your left (leading) leg. Don't overextend the knee of either your kicking or pivot legs.

Stopping the kicking leg.

At the starting point of your opponent's low roundhouse kick, kick at the thigh just below the groin.

Body stopping.

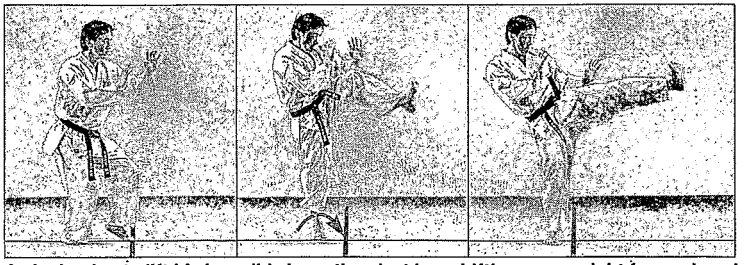
Aim at the hip on the kicking leg side (if you aim at the other side it's easy to miss). Since it is possible for your opponent to read what you're doing, train to be able to switch from a pivot leg stop to a kicking leg stop.

Pivot leg stopping.

The moment your opponent launches his kick, aim at the knee joint of his pivot leg (or his testicles), kicking in the same way as the joint kick. Since his pivot leg will turn as a result of his kicking motion, kick down the line the leg will take.

In a fight, your follow-up techniques will depend on whether your opponent brings his foot down in front of him or behind him. As you practice blocking techniques, always think what offensive technique you are going to follow up with. Remember, against a left inside kick to the inner thigh you can also switch to the hooking kick.

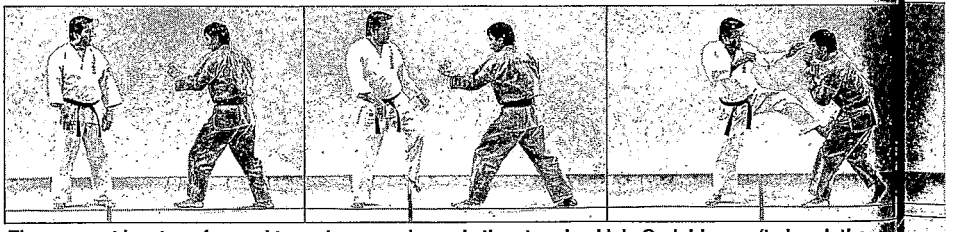
When stopping someone's attack, you are countering him just as he advances, so you need to produce enough explosive power not to be beaten back by his momentum. To do this, combine the stopping technique with an in step with your leg (twist or slide).



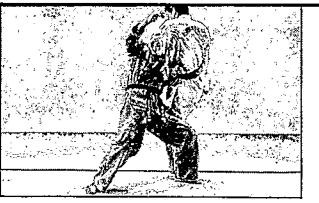
As he begins to lift his leg, slide in on the pivot leg, shifting your weight forward, and use the momentum to kick through him.

Stopping as a preemptive strike (self-defense)

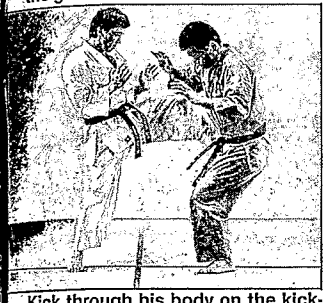
Stopping techniques can be used not only in defense but also for attacking. These photos show the stopping kick used in self-defense. Just as your opponent steps forward to grab you, punch your kick through his knee or thigh. This could also be used in the same way as a control technique. Increase power by twisting at the hips.



The moment be steps forward to grab or punch, apply the stopping kick. Grab his arm (to break the balance of his upper body and protect yourself), knocking him down with a further kick or a punch.



Kick through the thigh just below the groin.



Kick through his body on the kicking leg side.

Kick the thigh of his front leg (pivot leg) from the inside.

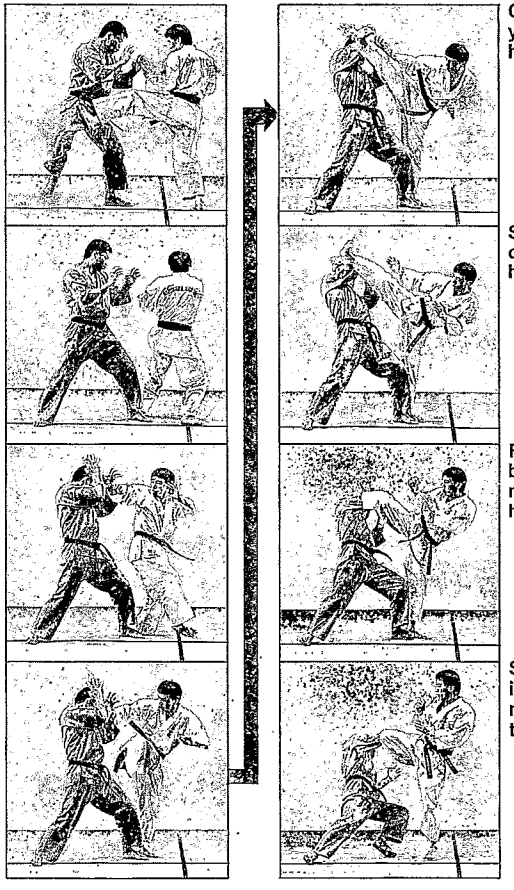
◎ Stopping kick leading to back roundhouse kick

When he pulls his kicking leg back following your stop kick...

...break his balance with your hands; bring your leg down in position [2] and begin to spin.

Use a handsword to knock him off balance.

Draw up your knee sharply for a compact kick.

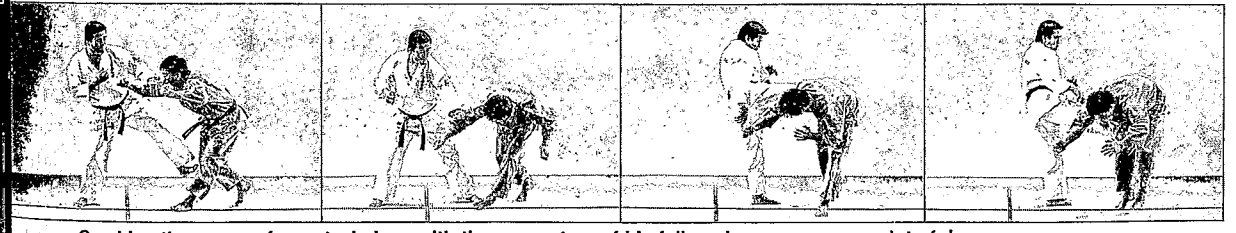


Control the range of your kick through the hips and hip joints.

Strike him on the side of the head with your heel.

From impact, fold back the knee, jamming the kick through him.

Spin through 360° using the stopping technique momentum and twist in the hips.

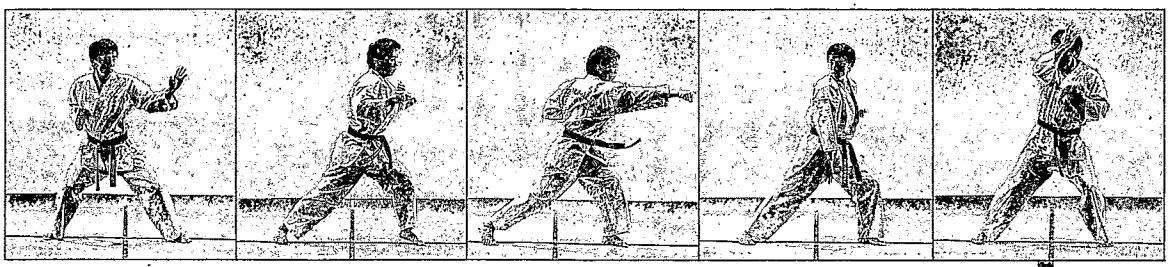


Combine the power of your technique with the momentum of his fall, and you can cause a lot of damage.

CIRCULAR REVERSE PUNCH

Circular reverse punch—block and strike

The reverse punch means punching with the hand opposite your leading leg. The circular reverse punch entails a handsword inside block with one hand as you throw a straight punch with the other. During the course of basic practice follow a left handsword block with a right punch, a right hand block with a left punch. From a front-leaning stance, make sure your lower body is stable and twisting sharply at the hips to bring yourself side on to your opponent, then launch your punch. As you block, don't expose your ribs; block positivley. Pull your opposite hand back enough to create tension for the subsequent punch. Put your weight behind the punch, twisting at the knees and hips.



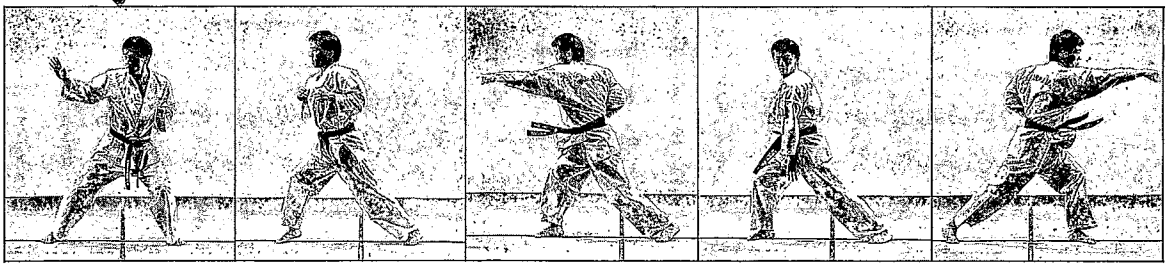
Circular reverse punch to the left out of front stance. Assuming he comes in with a left high punch, aim to unbalance him inside.

Pull back sharply with your left hand, twisting at the hips to punch a right middle straight.

Concentrate the spring from your right ankle and knee, plus the twisting motion of shoulders and hips, into the punch.

Drop the punching hand to provide cover for your groin, pulling your opposite hand back right to build tension for the next punch.

Providing cover for your face, draw a circle with your right hand, leading into a handsword block.



Build up tension in the opposite arm as you block with the handsword.

Move your weight forward over your right leg, leading with the knee twisting at the hips into a left middle straight punch.

Punch sharply, piercing your target, concentrating spring from your whole body into the punch.

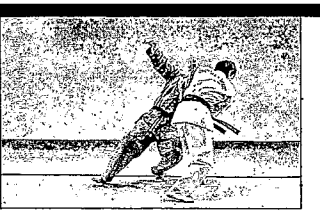
Drop the punching hand to provide cover for the groin, continue.

Strike both left and right with precision. Practice both high and middle punches.

After blocking with the handsword, turn 15° diagonally in fr and punch. Important points are twist at the hips and wei shift. Rotate the fist, keep the back leg of your front sta comfortable, don't let it become overextended or you'll be able to utilize its spring. Don't let the knee of your front drift outwards; concentrate power in your fist.

REVERSE PUNCH

From Blocks



Practice with combinations of all blocks and the reverse punch

After mastering basic training for each punch and block individually, the next step is to move on to combinations of these. I am always surprised by the number of people who can execute the individual blocks and punches very well, but cannot link them together or imagine their use in a real fight. This is just due to upset balance caused by weight shift and twisting of the hips. By combining the blocks and punches you can pinpoint the exact problem. You will come to understand how to link them in real fights. Needless to say, training can also be carried out in opposite order, from punch to block. Also train out of the fighting stance, combining each technique.

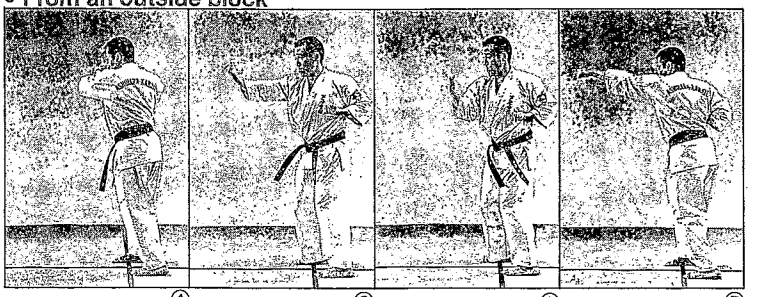
● From a high block

① Start with a right block and left reverse punch.

② As you execute a good high block with your right arm, build up tension in the left.

③ Using the reverse motion as you draw back your blocking hand, punch a high straight.

● From an outside block



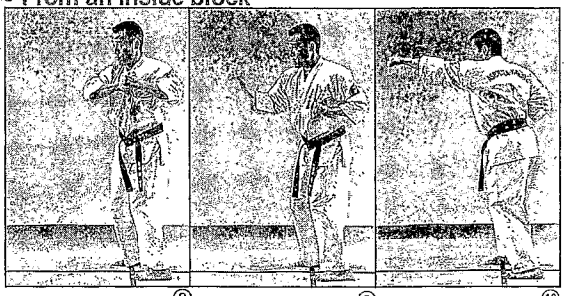
④ Start out of the basic position for a right outside block.

⑤ Block precisely as you learnt during basic practice.

⑥ As you pull back the outside block, turn into the side on position, building tension in your left arm.

⑦ Use the twist in the hips for a left middle straight punch. Vary the height between high and middle.

● From an inside block



⑧ Inside block to reverse punch. Don't expose your ribs!

⑨ As you twist side on, build tension in your hips, leading into the punch.

⑩ Release the spring in your hips, twisting sharply into a middle straight punch.

● From a low parry

⑪ Start out of the basic posture for the low parry.

⑫ As you block, pull back your left hand while twisting side on and storing tension in your hips.

⑬ After a good low parry, strike through sharply.

FRONT PARRY

Fighting technique as breathing exercise

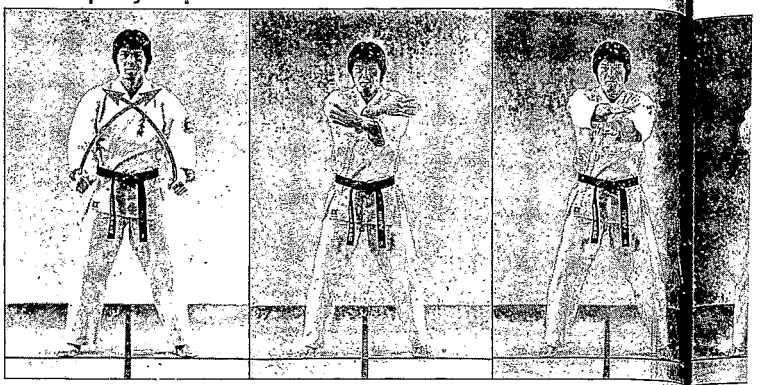
The front parry is also a deep breathing exercise to be used after basic practice. By expanding the chest, inhaling deeply and exhaling powerfully, you increase lung capacity and strengthen the chest. There are two methods of execution: the handspear and the palm twist. Start with the handspear form, and carry out four of each.

The front parry is not only a method of deep breathing, it contains within it a variety of movements with practical applications in a fight. Through practice of the front parry, you can learn how to knock down and sweep up your opponent's hand as it comes to grab your lapel (Self-defense ⇨p.166). It also serves to practice the handspear and the pulling-in motion of the hand in a real fight.

There are many who think of this technique as nothing *more* than a deep breathing exercise, but don't be influenced by this to fall behind in practice. Instead, constantly think over how the movements can be applied in a real fight. Use your precious time to good effect!

Rather than simply pursuing excellence in control techniques and sparring, learning the basics thoroughly is the quickest way to progress.

• Front parry—spear hand

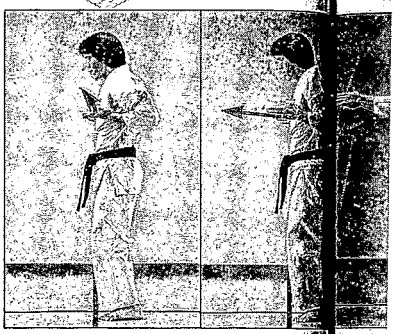


From the natural stance, raise your hands in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Cross your hands, extending your arms in front of your chest, then parry in a semi-circle.

As you parry, pull in your elbows.

The spear hand involves concentrating power in the fingers and driving your hands forward slowly and powerfully. It is used to attack the throat or ribs (jamming the fingers in between). Keep your arms tight into your body, controlling the technique from the elbows by rubbing them against the body as you drive your hands forward.



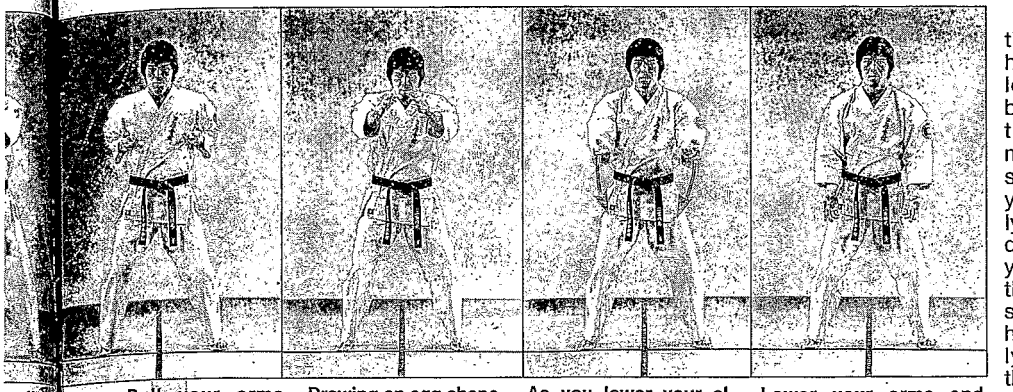
• Front parry—palm twist

This involves crossing both hands in front, pulling them close in, then adding a twist as you turn them from the inside out. Block with the handsword, draw a circle while turning your hands, crossing them inwards this time. Folding in your little and third fingers as you draw your arms in, leading with the elbows, inhaling deeply. From there turn you palms downwards while exhaling slowly.

Front parry—palm twist from the natural stance. Draw up both hands.

Bend at the elbows, crossing your hands in front; twisting at the wrists, block in front.

Turn your wrists and draw a circle outwards keeping your ribs coverd.



When training, execute the front parry—spear hand first. Make sure your lower body is stable, breathing in and out in time with your hand movements. From the start to the point where your hands are drawn fully back, inhale slowly and deeply. At that point, hold your breath for a moment, then as you execute the spear hand lower your hands and exhale strongly and slowly. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth.

pull

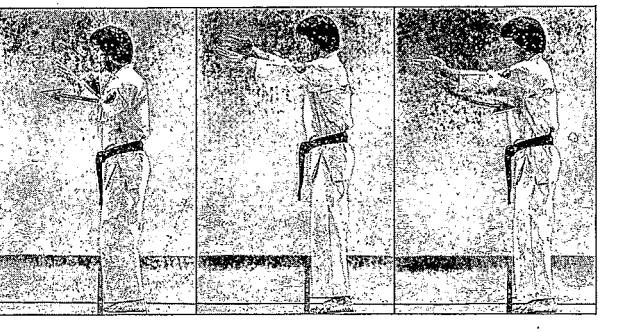
Pull your arms well back, then strike with a forward spear hand.

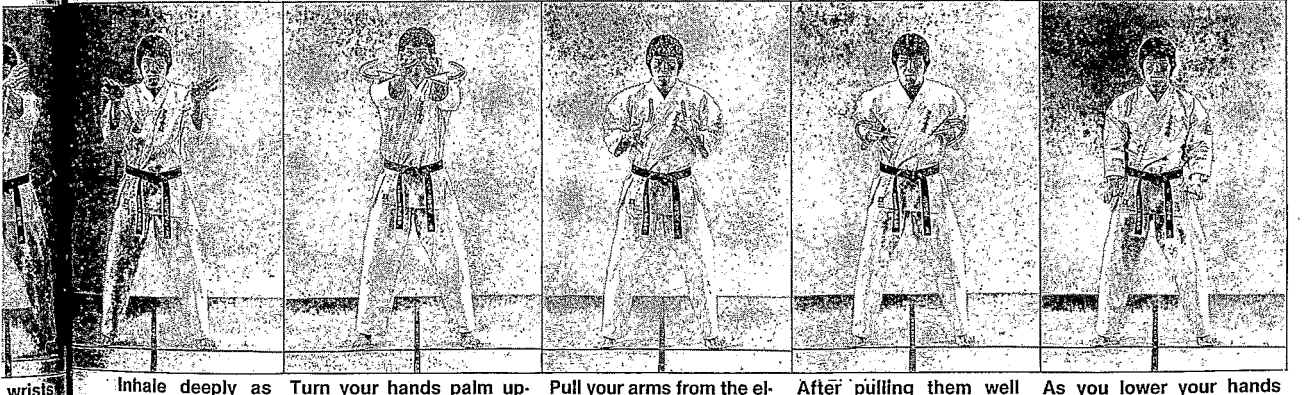
Drawing an egg shape with both hands, exhale as you lower your hands.

As you lower your elbows, your palms will naturally turn upwards.

Lower your arms and breath out at the same tempo slowly.

The drawing back motion of the hands in the palm twist is the movement used in a real fight to pull your opponent in to you. Bend your fingers slightly as you execute the move, as though catching onto his uniform. If you allow a gap to open between your arms and body while pulling back, you won't be able to concentrate power—keep your elbows tight in!





wrists
circle
eeping
verd.

Inhale deeply as you draw your arms in from the elbow.

Turn your hands palm upwards, turn them inside as you drive them forwards, then draw them back.

Pull your arms from the elbow straight back, keeping them tight against you body.

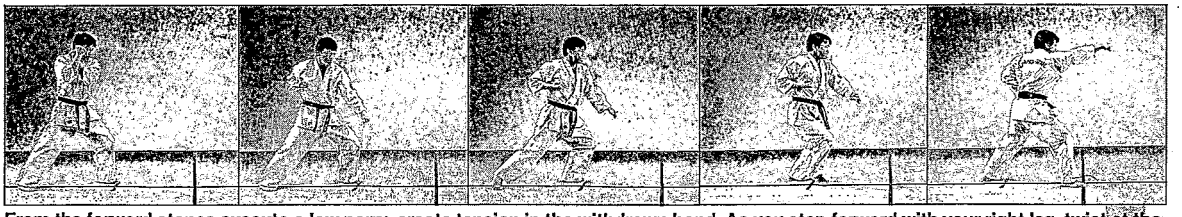
After pulling them well back, turn your hands palm down.

As you lower your hands slowly, exhale powerfully.

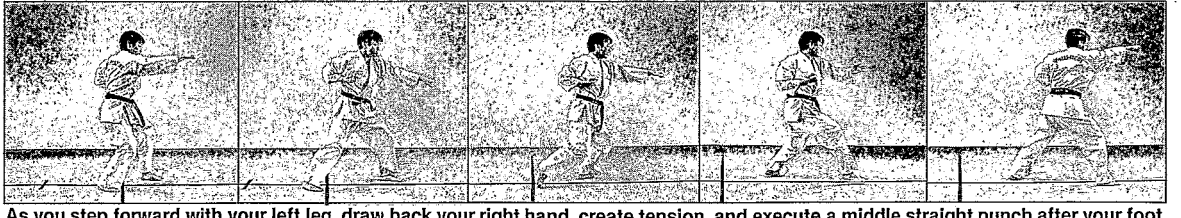
STEP AND PUNCH (REVERSE PUNCH)

In order to improve on basic practice, punches and kicks are carried out while on the move in the form of step and punch, step and reverse punch and step and kick. As you will realize, the ability to execute an effective attack while on the move is essential in a real fight. Step powerfully, punch smoothly and strongly. Step and punch utilizes the forward momentum of the step, punching at the same time with the corresponding hand.

• Step and punch—with each step execute 2 or 3 punches

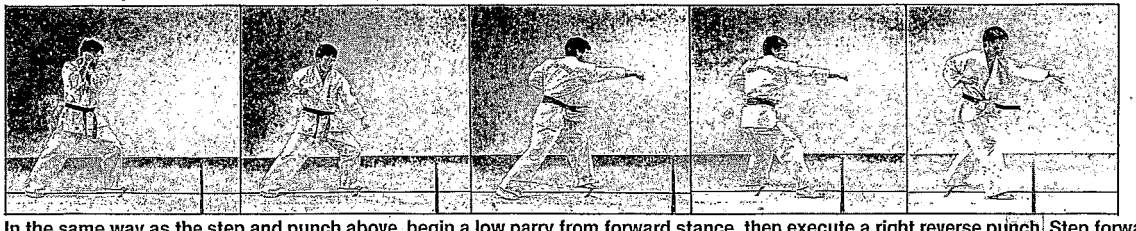


From the forward stance execute a low parry, create tension in the withdrawn hand. As you step forward with your right leg, twist at the hips, punching down your centerline with a high straight punch.



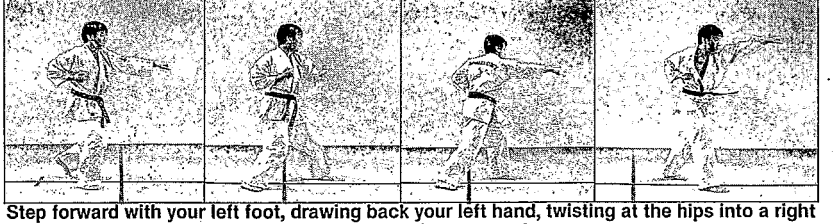
As you step forward with your left leg, draw back your right hand, create tension, and execute a middle straight punch after your foot touches down. Varying the height of your left and right punches, carry out combinations of 3 or 5 punches.

• Reverse punch—with each step execute 2 or 3 punches



In the same way as the step and punch above, begin a low parry from forward stance, then execute a right reverse punch. Step forward with your right foot for a left middle straight punch.

The reverse punch requires a kick off from the floor with your back leg, punching with the opposite hand to the foot you've put forward. For both punch and step and reverse punch vary the height of the punches, twist sharply at the hips, and take full advantage of the forward weight shift for maximum power.

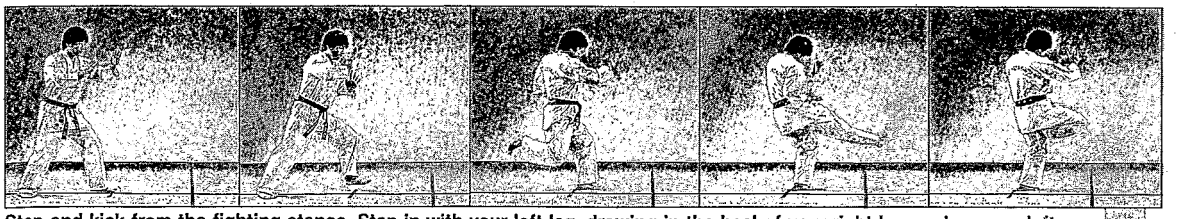


Step forward with your left foot, drawing back your left hand, twisting at the hips into a right middle straight punch. Execute combinations of 3 or 5 punches.

STEP AND KICK

PRACTICE WITH KICK COMBINATIONS

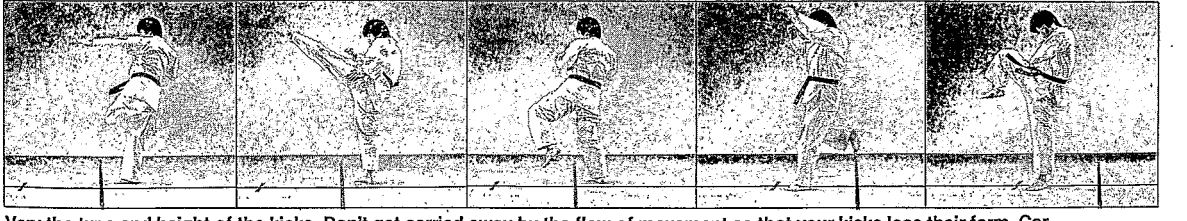
Training in step and kick (and kicks from the fighting stance) involves bringing the kicking foot down in front of you and using the resulting momentum to lead into another kick. The important thing to learn is that in a real fight kicking and then placing the foot is equivalent to taking a step, and it must become instinctive. Through step and kick practice, first learn how to shift your weight on to your front leg to kick on the move. In real fight training you must practice putting the kicking foot down both behind and to the side from a variety of different positions to go into your next kick.



Step and kick from the fighting stance. Step in with your left leg, drawing in the heel of your right leg, and as your left touches the ground swing out a low kick. Draw in the kicking leg, place it down in front of you.

As your right foot touches down, raise your left leg, building tension, to lead into a left middle roundhouse kick. In the same way, as you move forward execute a right middle roundhouse kick. Keep up your face guard.

Draw in your kicking leg and put it down in front of you. Next turn 180°, put in a right low kick, a left high kick and a right knee strike.



Vary the type and height of the kicks. Don't get carried away by the flow of movement so that your kicks lose their form. Carry out each kick carefully and correctly.

THROWS

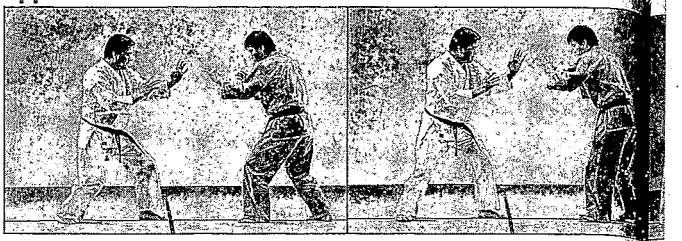
STRIKE THE NECK AND THROW HIM IN THE DIRECTION HE FACES

In Ashihara karate, throws are primarity carried out in the interests of safety. The movements of the hands, and footwork involved in throws are the same as those for the punches and kicks already covered: they are turned into throws to prevent accidents during training. This means that if you are thrown during practice, it is the equivalent of being repeatedly punched and kicked in a real fight. Remember that is easier to punch and kick than it is to throw. However, throws aren't carried out for their own sake, a throw is a block, balance breaking techinque and attack all rolled into one. Moreover it reduces the risk of injury and as such fulfills all the requirements for control techniques.

Furthermore, the throw can be combined with counter techniques either while it is being carried out, or afterwards.

The most important factor to master when throwing is footwork. Closing with your opponent quickly and leading his body through out step (lines ③ and ④) only work if they are done smoothly.

● Forward throw from your opponent's left side



Forward throw from position[2] in response to a left triangle kick.

Judge that a left kick is coming from the movement of his right leg.

Forward (winding) throw

Step in quickly to close with your opponent, controlling him by his neck or shoulder, and use the 180° arc described as you pull back your leg to throw him. You can also make the arc smaller and link up with punches or kicks.

It he resists and you fail to throw him, you can switch quickly to a backward throw.

Backward throw

Responding to an attack, move your right leg down line ④ (line ③ with your left leg leading) getting in close to your opponent's side, then use the twisting motion of the hips to strike up under his neck and throw him down.

● Backward throw from your opponent's left side.

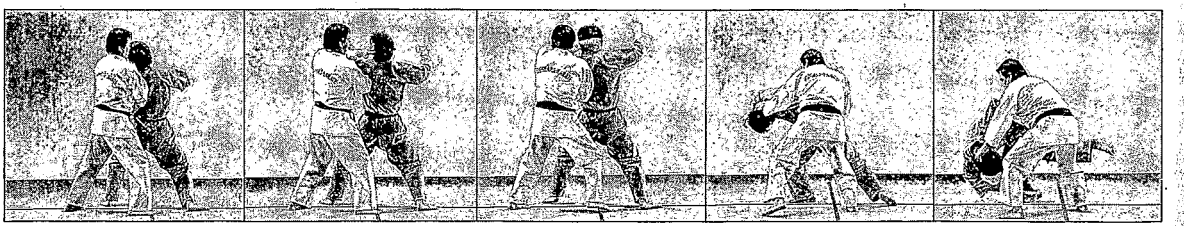
Block, then use your right hand to bring him in and turn him.

Get to his right side using cross step ① with your right leg.

Simultaneously bring your right hand up under his chin to push him over.

Pull back your left leg, throwing him with a sharp hip twist.

● Switch from backward to forward throw



You try to throw him backwards, but he successfully resists.

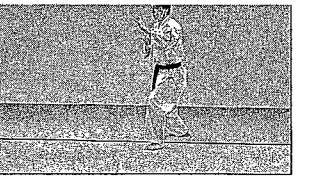
Bring your striking hand quickly around the back of his head for a forward throw.

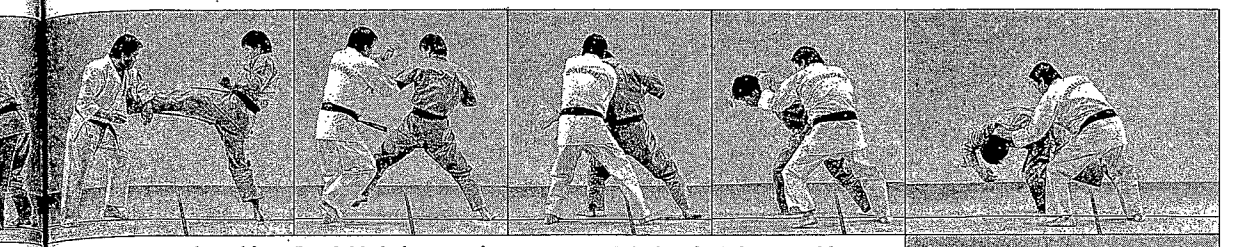
Use his own energy against him: throw in the direction in which he was trying to escape.

Step and twist at the hips, throwing him down with minimum effort.

Don't bother trying to resist his strength—use his own power to throw him.

★ In practice be sure your partner's head doesn't hit the floor!



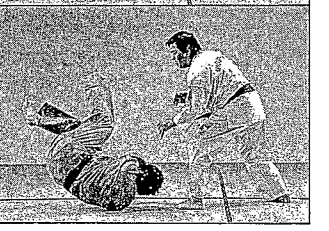


Step out from his kick and block with a low parry.

Break his balance and turn him, moving your right foot down line ②.

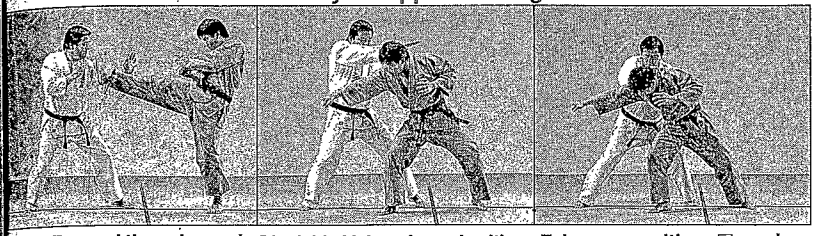
With your left hand protecting your face

Twist your hips using footwork, and throw him forward.



You are not throwing him with your hands, but with stepwork and hip-twist! As you throw, control the back of his head to stop it hitting the ground.

⊙ Forward throw from your opponent's right-hand side.

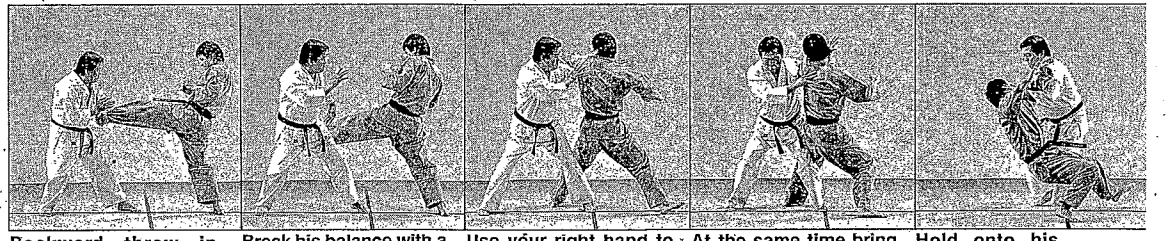


Forward throw in resply to a right kick.

Block his kick and punch with an outside block and roundhouse.

Take up position [1] and throw him with hip-twist.

⊙ Backward throw from your opponent's right side.



Backward throw in response to a left punch from a left triangle kick.

Break his balance with a low parry, deflecting his punch, then get in close.

Use your right hand to bring him inwards.

At the same time bring your left hand underneath his chin, puch him down and throw him with hip-twist.

Hold onto his clothes to break his fall.

⊙ Switch from forward to backward throw

When he resists your attempt to throw him forwards, switch to a backward throw.

Bring the hand which was pushing against the back of his head around quickly up under his chin.

As you break his balance with your left hand, step, twisting at the hips to throw him backwards.

Help him along in the direction he was pulling, and throw him.

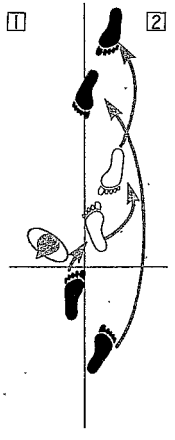
You can also counter here with a knee strike.

THROWS STEP THROW

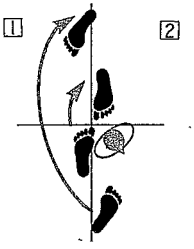
The step throw is an application of the running step and uses your opponent's own attack (movement) to unbalance him by getting behind him and grabbing his collar or hair to pull him down.

In response to his attack, slip past his side to take up the back position. If he comes at you with a right kick, move to his right side; if it's a left kick, move past his left side. If you get behind him, throw him by drawing your leg around through 180°. Your can also apply counter kicks, punches or elbow strikes from this position; or you can switch to a forward throw halfway through a step throw. Once you get behind him where he can't see you, counter with punches and kicks.

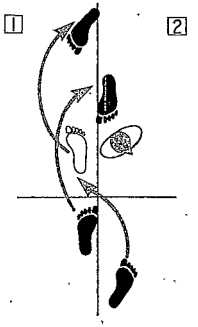
◦ Back position [2] from left cross step



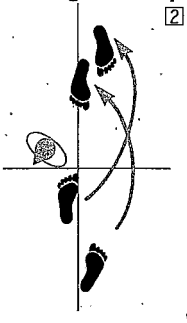
◦ Back position [1] from a left in step.



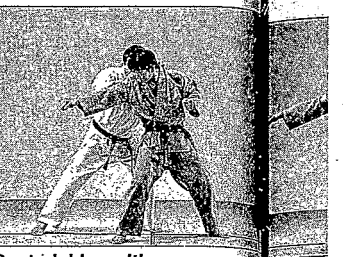
◦ Back position [1] from a right cross step



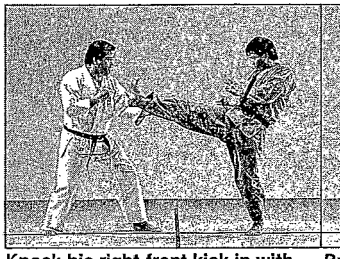
◦ Back position [2] from a right in step



Block his right front kick with a left outside block to break his balance, and step in with your left

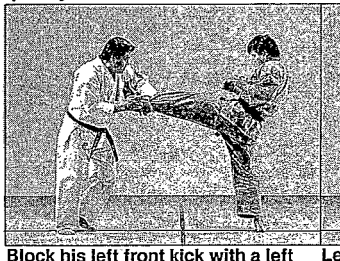


Control him with your left hand as you move your body into position.

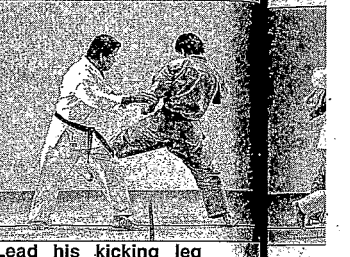


Knock his right front kick in with an outside block and move in quickly.

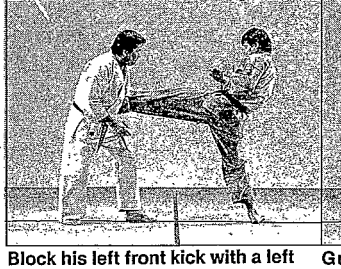
Break his balance with a roundhouse block from a right cross step.



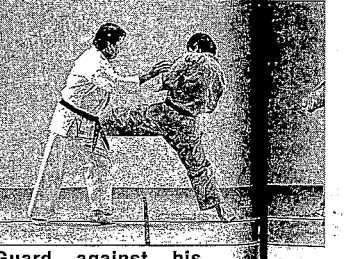
Block his left front kick with a left low parry. If he pulls back the kick, move to the opposite side.



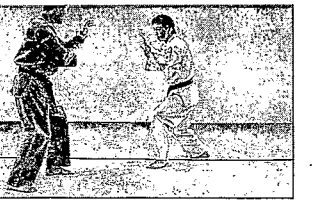
Lead his kicking leg down, stepping across with your left leg.



Block his left front kick with a left low parry.



Guard against his punch, stepping in with your right leg down line ② pivoting on your left leg.



Turn, moving your right leg down line ④.

Bring your right leg around wide, throwing him with hip-twist to unbalance him.

Take him down by pulling his collar, leading with the elbow.

You can hit him with a punch or elbow strike as he goes down.

After your attack is completed, always return to your original stance.

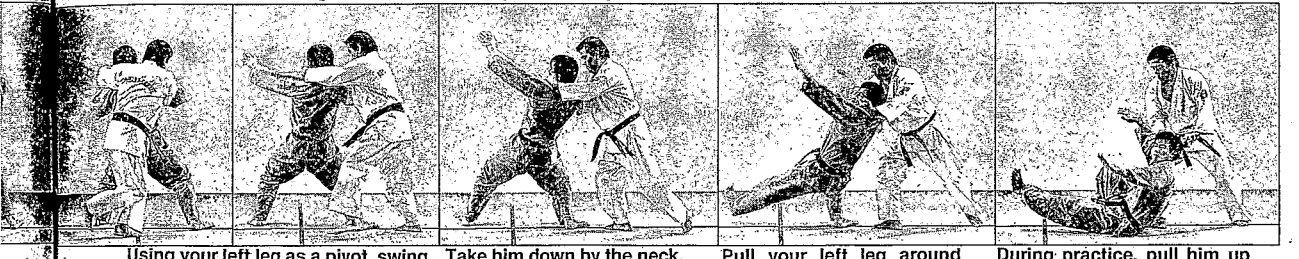
Get in close, break his balance and turn into him.

Twist with your right leg as a pivot, grabbing his collar.

Take up the back position, throwing him with your twisting motion.

Draw back your right foot, pulling him down from the back position.

As he goes down you can hit him with a punch or a kick.



Using your left leg as a pivot, swing your right around down line ②, while pulling him in.

Take him down by the neck, throwing him with the momentum of your twist.

Pull your left leg around wide and you'll take him down easily.

During practice, pull him up so his head doesn't hit the floor. It is dangerous.

Take the back position, getting in close.

Twist sharply into position.

Grab his face, swinging your left leg around to continue the twist.

Keep your hips stable. You'll find the throw easier if you 'twist' him down.

Always keep your center of gravity low and your arms tight in to your body. Throw from the hips.

COMBINATIONS

COMBINE TECHNIQUES AT DIFFERENT RANGES

The purpose of all combinations is attack

I was once puzzled by a question put to me at a dojo. "Sensei, I understand blocking combinations but what should I do about attack combinations," the student asked.

"With combinations, the difference between defense and attack doesn't exist. They are all calculated to control the opponent. In other words, all combinations are attacks", was my reply at the time, but I couldn't understand why I had been asked such a question.

Thinking about it later, I realized that this misunderstanding must have grown from the fact that all the combinations and control kata taught in Ashihara karate begin with either an out step, a block, a stopping kick or a leg hook, giving the mistaken impression that they are 'blocking combinations.' Unless your opponent is a piece of wood or stone, he'll be using karate punches and kicks when he attacks, so it seems to me only natural that you should block his attacks and break

Combination of lower block, consecutive punching and kick.

Side step with the right leg down line (2) while blocking with a low parry.

Step out down line (3) with your left leg to take up position [4].

Bring back your left hand to guard your face while winding up your right arm. Step in with your left leg to build spring in your hips....

...Shift your weight forward and throw a straight right.

• Running Kick

A running kick uses the footwork essential to combinations. It employs a running step to rapidly close the distance between you and your opponent. You use the resultant momentum to unleash a highly destructive kick. Putting your weight behind your kicking leg, kick with the power of your whole body.

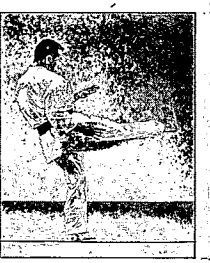
Right running kick with an advancing right leg.

Step forward with your right leg, shifting your body weight onto it.

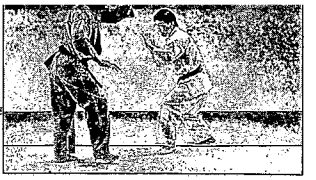
Kick off with the right foot, using the spring in your knee and ankle.

Determine direction with the left leg and read range instantaneously.

Pull back your heel as you step forward, winding up the kick.

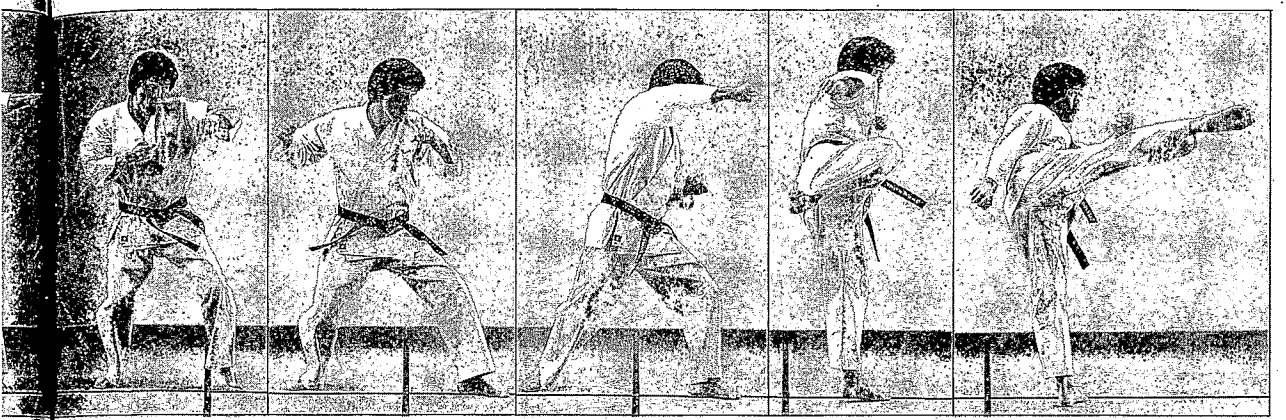


As you land, kick sharply through your target.



his balance before countering. To think that just because a block is included the technique is therefore purely defensive is jumping to conclusions. When attacking you can't afford to neglect your guard and blocks. (If there is a big difference in the level of technical competence, you can win just through footwork, dodging his repeated attacks and tiring him out. But if you don't attack him at all, he'll start to think that he should be taking the opportunity to rest.) I can't stress this enough: combinations are attack and defense rolled into one.

The combinations and control techniques explained hereafter are all intended for attack. And keep in mind that power is born of rhythm!



Pull back the right hand, and use the tension to deliver a left hook.

Build spring from the twist in the left hook, step in and twist at the knee into a long right hook.

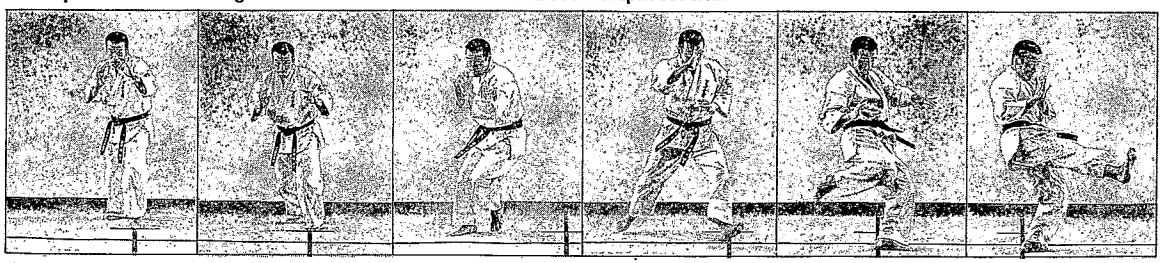
Use the momentum from the right to swing into a right middle roundhouse kick as you pull the right elbow back in.

Don't let the flow destroy the form of your kick. Create tension, link your techniques and kick accurately.

Keep in mind his movements and strike the target accurately. In combinations make sure that your first attack in particular is correct: this is the key.

• Zigzag kick

This kick uses a zigzag motion to step to the side position, loading the momentum from the step onto the kick-through. You can also use the same momentum from the step to throw a punch. The step and kick/punch must be carried out in a split second.



Right zigzag kick and advancing right leg.

Step forward with your right leg, get to your opponent's side and build spring in your hips.

Kick off from the ground with your right foot with plenty of tension.

Put the momentum from your step into the kick and kick in.

Build spring in the knee, the kick impacting as you land.

Don't forget your guard; kick without losing your balance.

COMBINATION TRAINING

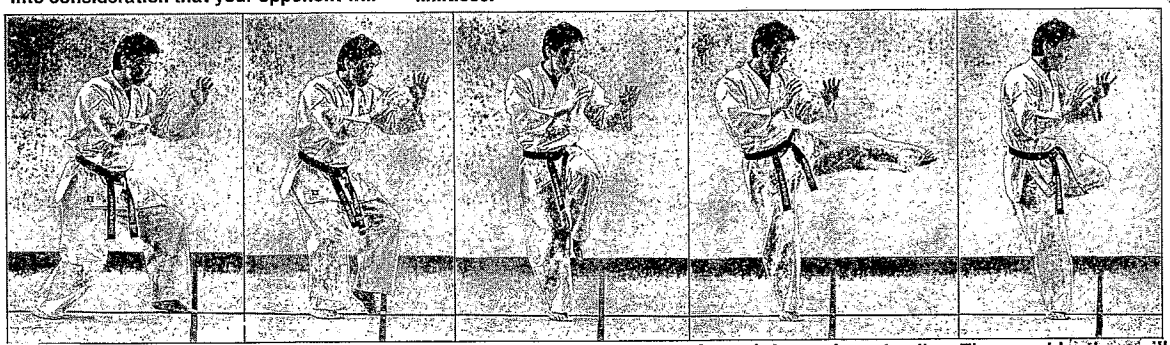
Combine techniques cleanly, don't overdo it

When practicing combinations always put your techniques together imagining your opponent's movements. Don't stop in front of him: use stepwork to get into position. Consider how your opponent will move and respond to your attack.

The first and second attacks of your combination are the most vital. If you don't hit home with your first blow, causing damage and breaking his balance, you won't even be able to launch your second! Instead you'll find that it's him doing all the controlling. Keep these things in mind as you begin, slowly at first—shedding any forced and unnecessary movements. Move smoothly, gradually acquiring rhythm, speed and power. If you hurry, just trying to imitate the movements of the black belts, you'll neglect important points, so don't!

• Combination from a leg hook

Combinations aren't only practiced from hand blocks, but naturally also from knee blocks, stopping and leg hooks—the various blocking techniques. Position yourself and put your techniques together taking into consideration that your opponent will react differently to your blocks, depending on whether you move into infight range or push him away and give yourself a longer range from which to attack. You can kick with both legs—the combinations are limitless.



Combination from left leg hook.

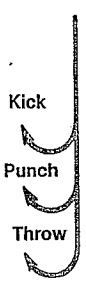
Imagine an inside low kick coming at you: execute a leg hook.

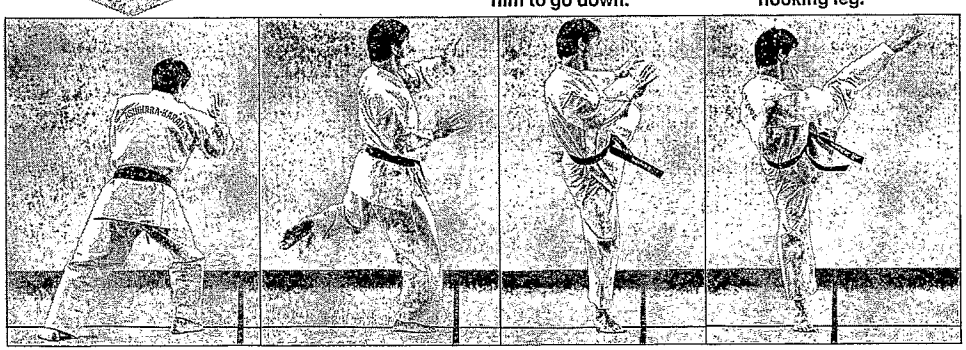
Judge the line of his kick and hook his leg.

Control the angle and pulling motion of your hook depending on how you want him to go down.

The combination will vary according to where you bring down the hooking leg.

• Follow-ups to the leg hook



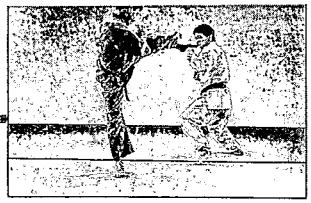


Pull your left leg down line (3), building spring in your legs and hips.

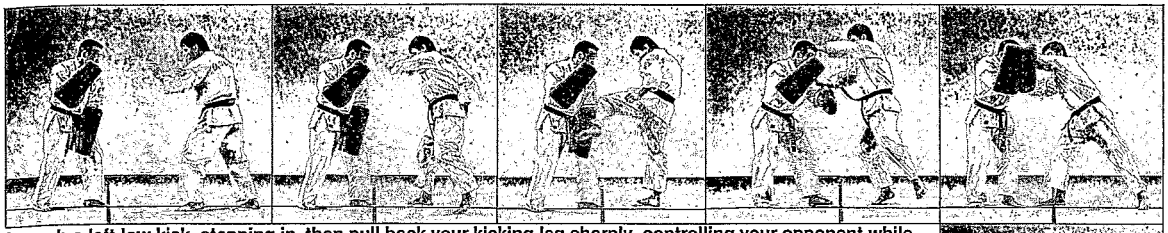
Without dropping your guard, kick.

Don't lose your form through the flow of techniques. Kick as taught during basic training.

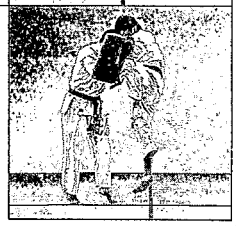
Vary the type of kick depending on the angle and position of the target.



• Double kick training with the mitt



Launch a left low kick, stepping in, then pull back your kicking leg sharply, controlling your opponent while moving into a left knee strike.



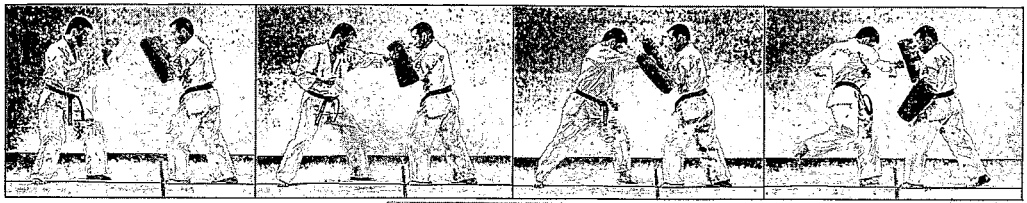
■ Combination—checklist ■

- Move smoothly, don't feel on edge (screwing up your face won't make you strong). If you're tense, timing becomes difficult.
- Keep up your guard as you punch and kick.
- Don't expose your ribs (many people get carried away by the speed of combinations, overdoing the movements and raising their elbows).
- Don't look down. Keep your eyes fixed on your (imagined) opponent.
- Make full use of spring. (Don't lose form for the sake of speed.)
- Bring your kicking leg down silently. (Don't land on the heel.)
- With double elbow or knee strikes, vary the angle of the strike.
- When you are kicking, differentiate clearly between high, middle and low.

• Combinations with the mitt

Never kick half-heartedly, always be conscious of where you are aiming the kick.

- Include ball of the foot kicks. (It is highly effective if you kick to his body with the ball of your foot, forcing him to drop his guard, then link up with a high kick—roundhouse with the back leg, back roundhouse kick or a back kick.)
- When you punch or kick with your back leg, make the shift of body weight onto the front foot smooth.
- Don't just punch straight: use jabs, hooks, uppercuts, cross uppercuts and elbow strikes.
- Keep your steps short (if they are too long, you won't be able to use the twist in your hips. With short steps you can move quickly, and footwork and infighting becoming easier.
- Launch each technique speedily.



Punch/kick combination. Leading with the left, use the momentum from a one-two punch combination to move into a right low kick/left elbow strike combination.

Use your hips to increase impact and help follow-through in mitt training. Put together your techniques using leg recoil from the mitt for positioning.

Control range by push or pull. Make use of hip-twist for each technique, linking the moves.

FIGHT CONTROL

SUPER-EFFECTIVE IN INFIGHT RANGE!

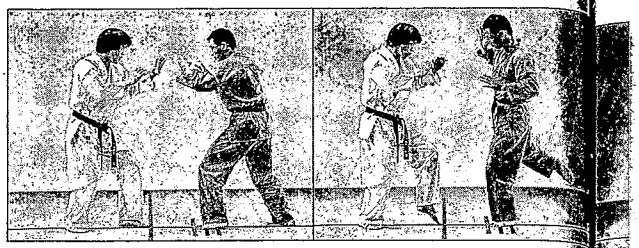
Control techniques set Ashihara karate apart from all other styles: they were developed to change the image of karate from that of a brawl in which the strongest person comes out on top to one where the fighter who has developed his physical capabilities to their full potential through logical system of training will emerge as victor.

Control techniques are safe: they enable you to hit without being hit and fell your opponent without being knocked down yourself. The ideal is to use positioning, changes of range, judgement and everything else explained so far, to find the best launching point for an attack which your opponent won't be able to respond to.

To this end, a scientific approach and rational training are essential. You must train in order to know how to react when an opponent comes at you with a right front kick or what to do when he attacks you with a combination of a left hook from a left low kick, so that when the time comes you can execute the techniques correctly and smoothly in a real fight.

• Infight control techniques

The basis of any control technique is an infight position. Step in as you break his balance, spinning him inside by pushing and/or pulling to preclude any possibility of his hitting you with a counterattack, then launch your own attack. Use the momentum of your instep to attack swiftly, then get in close; alternatively you can push him away to change the range if this will create optimum conditions for your attack.



Control techniques in response to a low kick from short range.

• Have you mastered the points in the combination checklist?

In control techinque training, it is essential that you have a clear understanding of the points raised about combinations in the checklist on the previous page. For example, why should double and triple kicks be divided between low, middle and high? Let's imagine that your first (high) attack was successful. As he goes down, his position will become lower, so if your next attack follows at the same height, the kick will miss. Aim to cut out this waste through combat practice and concentrate on putting together *practical* combinations. It is vital that you keep your chin in for control techniques, as well as your elbows guarding your ribs and a guard for your face. Keep your body taut so that there is no way you can be felled by single technique. Your hands must be ready to switch quickly to a punch, so have them either lightly clenched or open. Your knees and thighs should be closed slightly inwards, storing spring in your legs and hips so that your steps, blocks and attacks will not lose out to your opponent's momentum. Check form and balance, maintaining a position from which you can launch combinations.

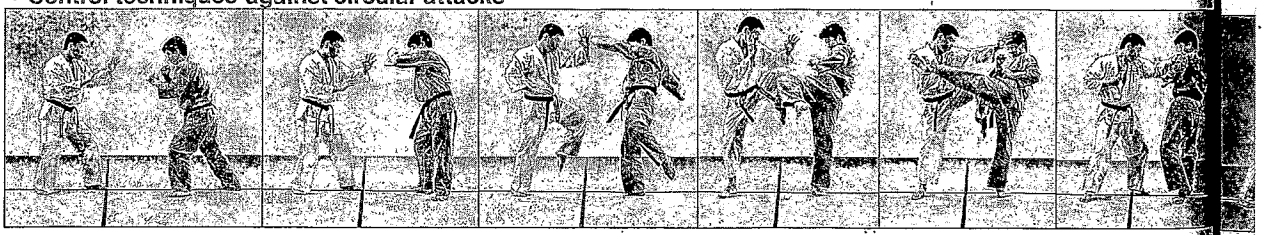
Unlike in combination training, where you practice by yourself, a real opponent will actually be bearing down on you, so don't be scared—block and attack without hesitation. If you have mastered the basics properly, you have nothing to worry about.

Control techniques to suit the attack • Control techniques against straight attac

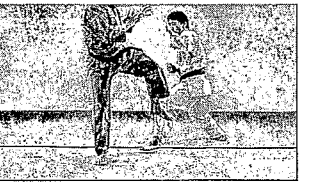
In response to a straight attack, spin your opponent in to break his balance. To a circular attack, respond by adding your strength to his momentum (direction) to spin him a round and break his balance. Alternatively, you can break his balance before the circular motion starts (ie at the instant the technique begins). A final alternative is to step out to absorb the impact, and attack him on the follow-through before he touches down.

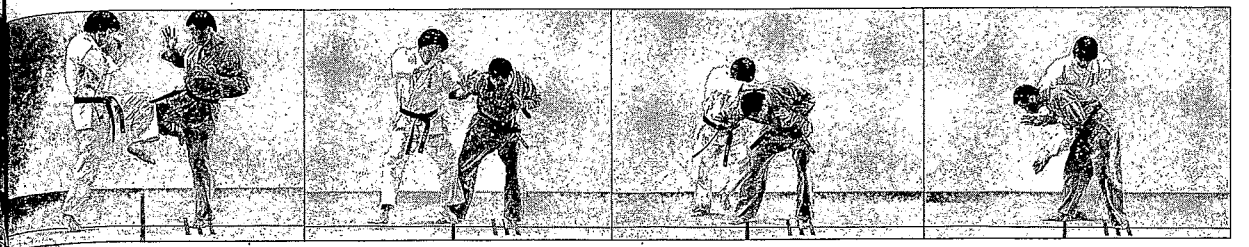
Control techniques in response to straight attacks, straight punch, front and side kicks.

• Control techniques against circular attacks



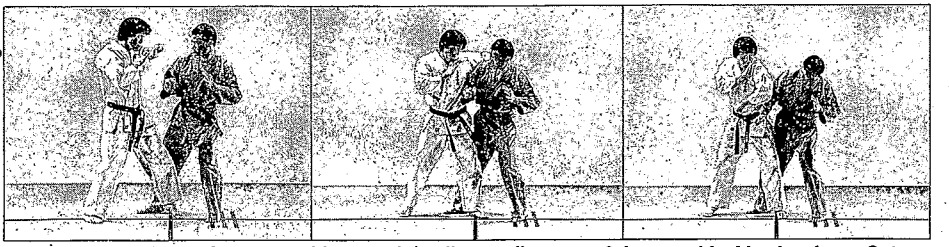
In response to circular attacks e.g. roundhouse, or back roundhouse kicks, stop the technique before it gets going, using the knee block, stopping techniques or by cutting away his pivot leg.



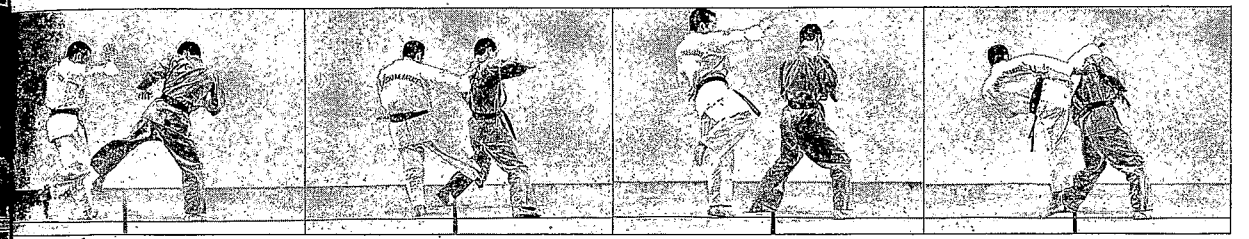


Break his balance with your hands, grounding your knee block in front and moving into the infight position. Pull on him to break his balance and prevent a counter, then hit with a right knee strike.

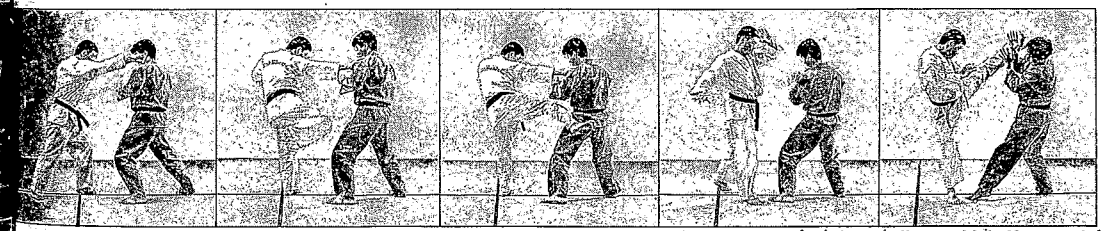
In an infight position, if you don't break his balance sufficiently, you are going to be on the receiving end of a counterattack. To prevent that, launch an attack as your blocking leg touches down. Block and attack should be a single movement.



When he comes forward, counter with a punch or elbow strike as you bring your blocking leg down. Get close to prevent him responding.



The photograph shows a left low parry-low kick-high kick combination in response to a side kick. Bring back your kicking leg fast to wind up for the high kick.



Photos: left knee—block push to range for right low kick—left high kick in response to a left roundhouse kick. If you catch it at the start, you can block a high kick at a low position.

FIGHT CONTROL

Training

The points to remember when practicing control techniques and when training with an opponent, are the same as those for solitary combination training, so if you really want to master the combinations you perform alone, you've got to train with an opponent and check his reactions to your moves. And mastering combinations is essential: if you don't, you'll never execute correct control techniques. Furthermore, if you don't train with a partner the combinations you do learn won't be the instinctive, real fight variety.

Because you actually have an opponent in front of you, you can check your judgement, positioning, range, and the attacks and defenses that you instinctively put up in response to his attacks.

Fight control—range changes

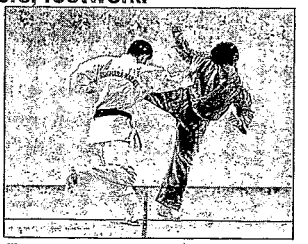
In free sparring, range will change as you and your opponent both launch your attacks. Imagine launching a front kick from long range: in effect it's the same as taking a step forward as you would with an in step. If he doesn't move, your kicking leg with touch down in what is middle range. If he steps in before your foot touches down, you'll find yourself at short range. If he steps back, it will be back to long range again.

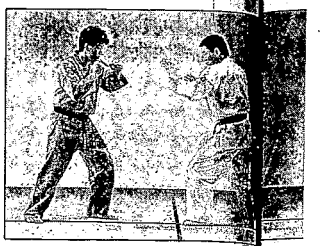
At middle range, you will be flattened if you don't immediately unbalance him with an inside low kick, a cutting kick, a punch or the like; alternatively, you can position yourself by stepping in to get close or stepping out to give yourself space.

At long range, since your opponent has retreated, plough into him with a combination of attacks. At short range, just stepping back will put you in much greater danger, be-

• Linking techniques: break his balance with all you've got —hands, feet, shoulders, footwork.

In control techniques, after breaking your opponent's balance with your first block, you must prevent recovery before you launch your counter with such linking techniques as pushing, pulling and holding. Linking techniques are also used to control range, ensuring that your blows hit home accurately. Use a cumulation of little movements to break him down, and then counter.

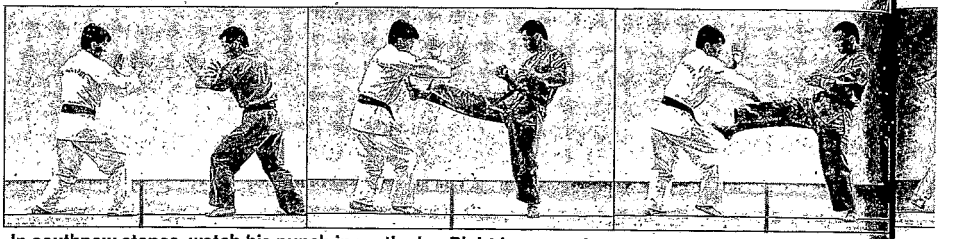




From a left high block, step in towards his center line, and push him away on the shoulder.

• Control techniques —southpaw stance

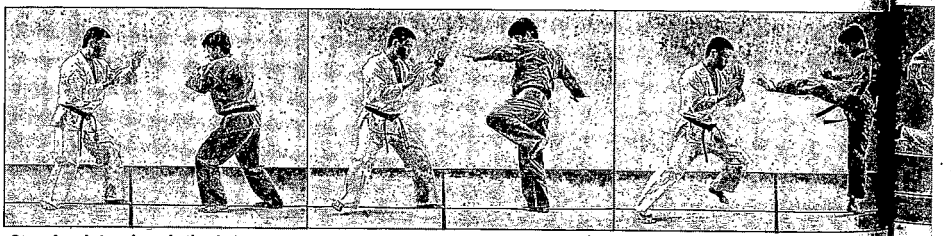
In a real fight you'll often end up in southpaw style as a result of a kick or a step. This should tell you that regular training in southpaw stance is vital to your success—awkwardness or hesitation could finish you. There is no need for anything extraordinary: simply train to ensure you can carry out the basics correctly either to the left or to the right.



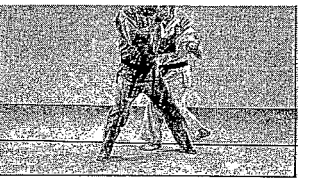
In southpaw stance, watch his punch in particular. Right low parry in response to his right front

• Control technique using a slide kick from an out step

When you have stepped out to absorb the impact of a kick, and immediately moved back into counter-attack, slide your leading foot forward, putting your weight over it (a long range use instep); this puts extra speed and power into your kick: add the twisting motion of your heel. Sliding your foot smoothly forward, and keep it on the ground.

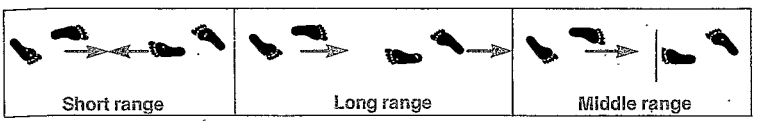


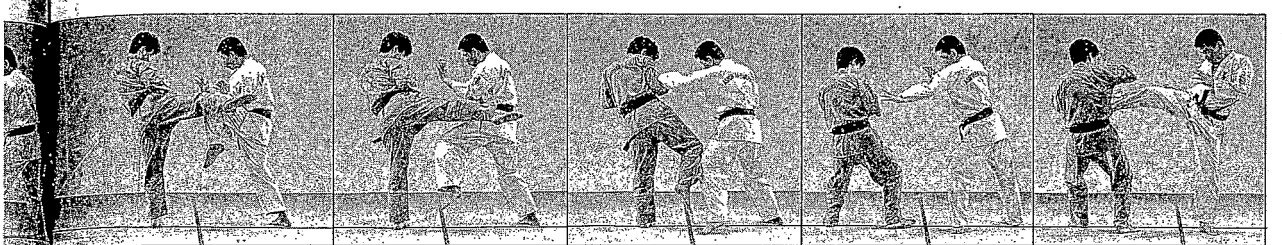
Step back to absorb the left roundhouse kick, then step back in, sliding your pivot leg forward as



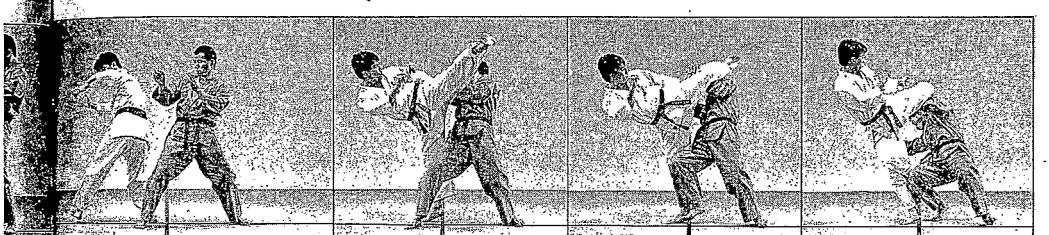
cause you are creating the distance needed for an attack. By stepping back, you put yourself into middle range, where techniques are most effective, and since he is advancing you will be forever on the defensive. In such circumstances, you should switch to infighting, breaking his balance as he steps forward and countering with punches and knee strikes, and a whole range of techniques to follow up your initial kick. If you don't, there is no way you can ever get him down.

Again, you should train to be able to move forward, getting in close (of course not just in a straight line, but carefully positioning yourself). Start your fight control training lightly and slowly.

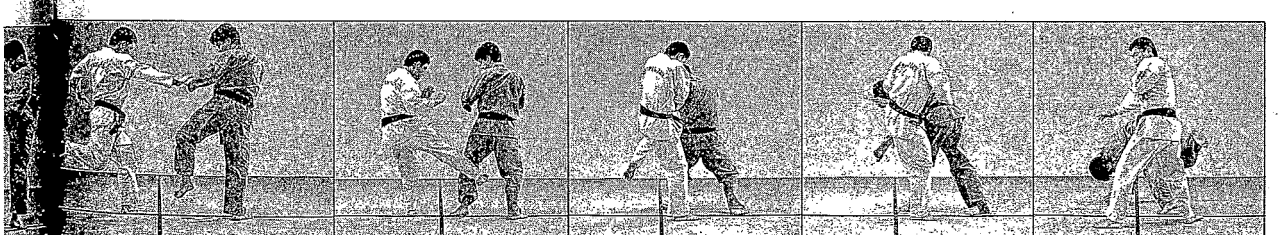




Block your opponent's right roundhouse kick with a left double block, pushing him away with your left hand before his leg grounds to unbalance him and control distance for a right middle roundhouse kick.



kick and right cross instep finishing with a left back roundhouse kick. Use your low parry to control his kick, bringing it down where you want it and breaking his balance.



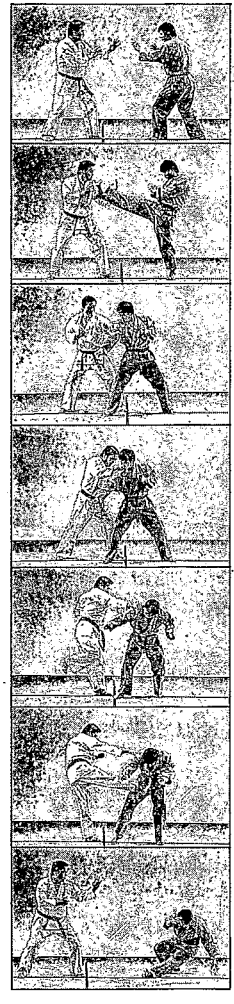
you launch a right low kick to break his balance, closing in to counter with a knee strike and a forward throw. When his kicking leg grounds, bringing you close, move straight into the slide kick.

FIGHT CONTROL

MOVE TO HIS SIDE: SIX RESPONSES TO A COMBINATION ATTACK

When responding to an incoming combination, the most important point is to block his first attack correctly, breaking his balance and knocking his subsequent attack off course, so preventing him from hitting you. If you can knock him inside with your first block, break his balance and deflect his second attack as you get in close on his outside, victory is almost assured. Watch out for his backhand and back roundhouse elbow strikes.

• Push him away and attack



In response to a right front kick/right punch combination.

Block his right front kick with a left outside block.

Turn the blocking hand, deflecting his right punch diagonally downwards.

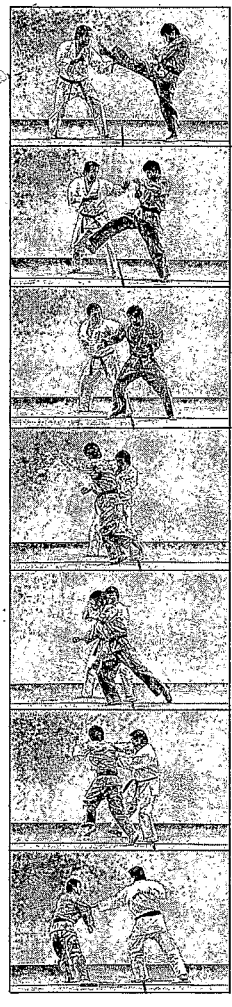
Push him away, breaking his balance with a left handsword to his shoulder.

Create space with a punch or kick and then kick with a right triangle kick.

Kick through the body using the ball of your foot.

Pull back your kicking leg fast; return to your original stance.

• Pull him to break his balance and attack



Dodge his front kick with an out step, then step in quickly.

Step in to his side before his leg touches down.

Turn side-on to him, deflecting his punch (you could also add a right punch).

Close in, pulling on his right shoulder to break his balance.

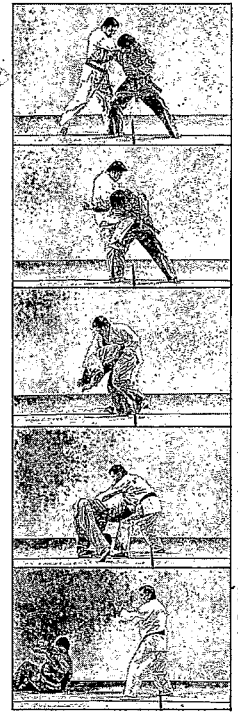
Use his momentum to spin him around.

Use the momentum from his punch to push him forward, drawing back your leg to spin him.

Hit him with a right punch, drawing your right foot around.

From here you can counter with a right roundhouse.

• Backward throw attack



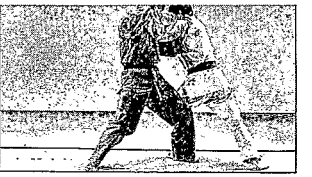
As you deflect his right punch use roundhouse block to get close.

Jam a right knee strike into his body (face or groin).

Pull your leg around through a 90° arc, throwing him forward.

Use the hip-twist from pulling back your leg to throw him.

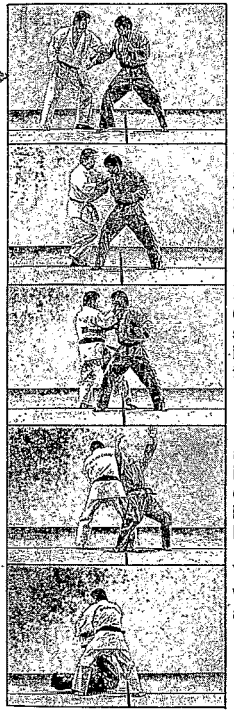
You can also hit him with a counter as you throw.



■ Fight control—checklist ■

- After the opponent's punch or kick has followed through, but before it has started to recover, you should have positioned yourself behind him or to his side by moving down lines (1) and (2), or (3) and (4).
- Anticipate where his attacks are going, block and break his balance, and counter before he grounds.
- Guess what's coming from his footwork, then attack.
- Break his stance and various attacks where they are weakest.
- Break him from low down
- Break him from close in.
- Break his body diagonally downwards and inwards; combine with a counter.
- Make the control technique a reflex action through countless repetition.
- Watch the timing, and release precise techniques in response to different attacks.
- Attack with rhythm and timing, moving effortlessly and smoothly.
- If you can't hit him from where you are, use a linking technique, then take him down.

● Attack from the back position



Draw his right punch in with a left outside block, breaking his balance and moving in close.

Step in with your right leg, bringing your right hand up underneath his chin.

Bring your right leg down outside him, strike your body into him as you throw.

Holding his neck, and with the twist in the hips from the cross step, take him down over your leg.

You can hit him with a knee strike as he goes down.

● Forward throw attack

Deflect his right punch, moving your left leg down line ① and grabbing his collar.

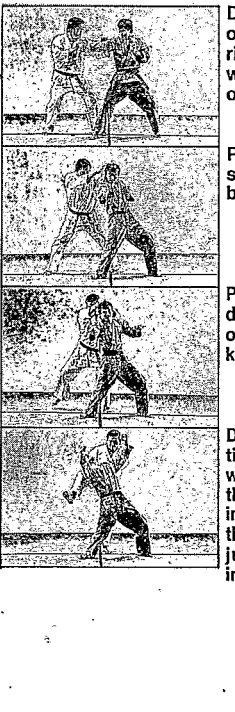
Control his elbow with your right hand to guard yourself, pulling your right leg back along line ④.

Control range with your hands, taking up position **1**.

Kick the back of his knee with a left joint kick.

Control his fall to stop his head hitting the ground as he goes down.

● Turn your opponent around and attack.



Deflect your opponent's right punch with a right outside block.

Position yourself quickly behind him.

Pull him down, dropping him onto your right knee strike.

During practice, kick him with your thigh to avoid injury, or stop the technique just before impact.

Control Technique Kata

What are 'control technique kata'?

Control technique kata have been devised to help explain the idea behind Ashihara karate control techniques, and so the kata are based on basic control techniques. The kata are for real fights situation and are unique to Ashihara karate—"control technique—the complete works," you might say. There are six kata types: beginners', basic, throwing, sparring, fighting and self-defense. There are another two, weapons kata and circular kata, which involve the execution of virtually all control techniques within a circle 1-2m in diameter.

Each kata type is divided into 10 units: no. 1 is the stance; nos. 2—10 each consist of different control techniques for different attacks.

There are five types of pattern: [1] [2] are for short range, [3] [4] for middle range and [5] for long range. (Beginners' kata are all at middle range, and there are three types of each.)

Maybe there should be only one kata, and the others should be practiced as variations, but the danger is that people would be content with mastering just one of the variations. For this reason, I have created a large number of different kata so they can be practiced step by step according to the relative difficulty of the techniques required. Even so, there are as many as 50 possible variations for each of the separate units of a given kata.

The first kata I developed was the sparring kata and this has already been introduced in the first volume of *Eighting Karate.* In this volume I introduce the rhythm needed to break balance and attack from a block in *Beginners' kata* 1; how to move from block to break balance and attack in *Basic kata* 1; and smooth weight shift, footwork, throws and counters in *Throwing kata* 3. These kata contain all the movements which must be mastered in order to progress from white belt to brown belt, in addition to which, *Fighting kata [1]* has been included to teach the movements which must be mastered in order to enter the black belt class.

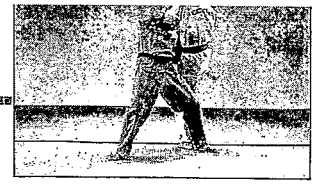
Each kata can be used for solo combination practice or with a partner as control technique training. Start off slowly, mastering the movements involved, then gradually speed up.

● Kata types and grades.

Kata / belt	Beginners			Basic					Throwing					Sparring					Fighting					Self-defense				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
W	●			●					●																			
Bl		●												●														
Y			●		●					●					●									●				
G						●					●					●			●					●				
Br							●					●					●			●					●			
Bk													●					●			●	●	●				●	●

This chart shows at what level which type of kata are to be learnt. Beginners should learn Beginners' kata 1. Throwing kata 1 and Basic kata 1 to get an idea of what karate is all about. As you improve, you learn other kata as shown on the chart. This chart shows the absolute minimum requirements for each level and is only a guide. Don't be satisfied with that: have your seniors teach you the higher level kata, then you'll be to understand the difference in movement between yourself and a more advanced student.
***The circular kata is for very advanced students.**

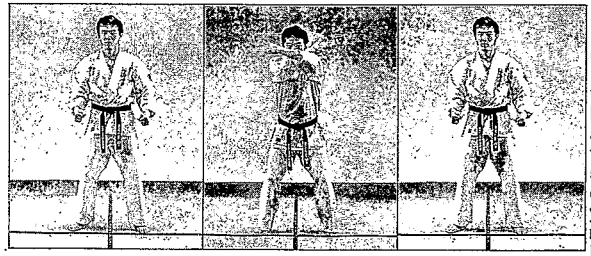
Beginners' Kata 1 Moves 1,2



Beginners' kata, as the name suggests, are used to introduce the basic movements which must be learnt first. Take the name to be a warning: "Don't forget the basics!" These kata are something to return to, even after you have reached a higher level, when you are going through difficulties and need to check your basics.

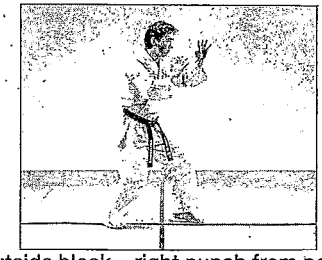
Beginers kata 1 involves first stepping back to deflect your opponent's technique, then from this safe position launching a correct counterattack. There is no need to rush. Slowly and carefully, watch your opponent's movements, and master a correct blocking and balance-breaking technique. In particular, learn the timing involved from the out step to the in step and attack. Middle range.

Ready stance



At the command "Yoi!" ("Ready!") cross your arms in front of your face then lower them, keeping them tight against your body, to take up natural stance. From the command "Yoi!" your kata has already begun. Don't relax for a moment.

Move 1 stance



The first movement of each kata move is taking stance. Move smoothly from the natural stance into fighting stance. Don't expose your ribs, and get the stance right. Go into Nove 2.

Move 2 out step, left outside block—right punch from position 1 [in response to a right middle punch]

From the stance, step out from his right middle punch.

As you step, execute a left outside block, spinning him inwards.

Step in to his right side: right straight punch.

Vary the type and height of the punch. Return to original stance.

Move 2-footwork

When training with a partner, vary the length of your out step according to his posture. Gradually shorten the step until you can deflect his punch with only a slight movement. After blocking with an outside block, time your punch correctly.

Beginners' Kata 1 Moves 3, 4, 5, 6

Move 3 left out step a left outside block—left in step—right punch—right middle roundhouse kick [in response to a right high punch]

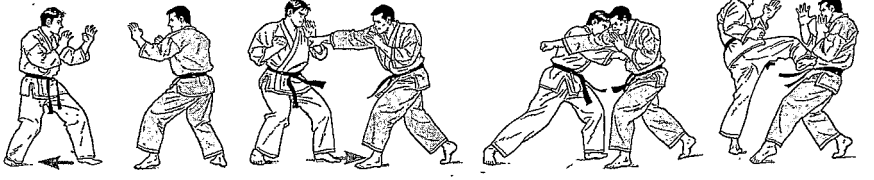
From the fighting stance in response to a right high punch.

Step back, watch his punch, left outside block.

Break his balance with an outside block and step in.

Use your left in step momentum for a right high punch...

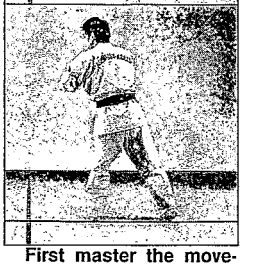
...and right middle roundhouse kick; make use of spring.



Step back, then step in down line (1), punching your opponent as his balance fails. As you punch, wind up your kick, kicking up smoothly with the ball of the foot.

Move 3-footwork

The low parry to a left middle punch will break his blance if you strike sharply with your wrist against his attacking arm. Change angle and height as you imagine different attacks.



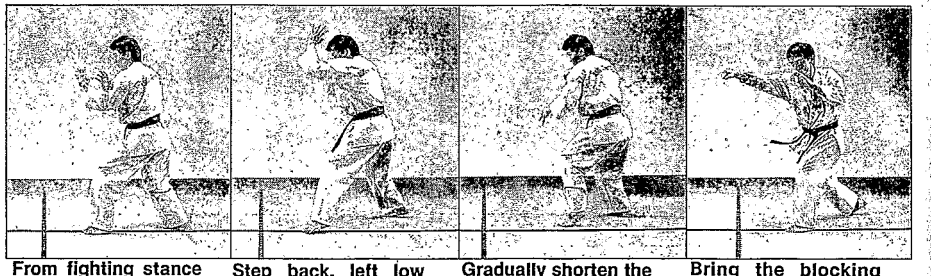
First master the movements, then you can vary kicking height.

Ground your kicking leg in front, turn 180° to return to stance.

Move 4

out step• left low parry—left in step, right punch from position 2 [in response to a left middle punch]

Move 4-footwork

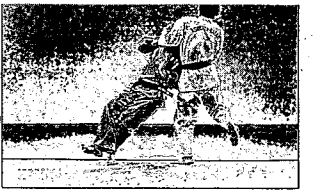


From fighting stance in response to a left middle punch.

Step back, left low parry.

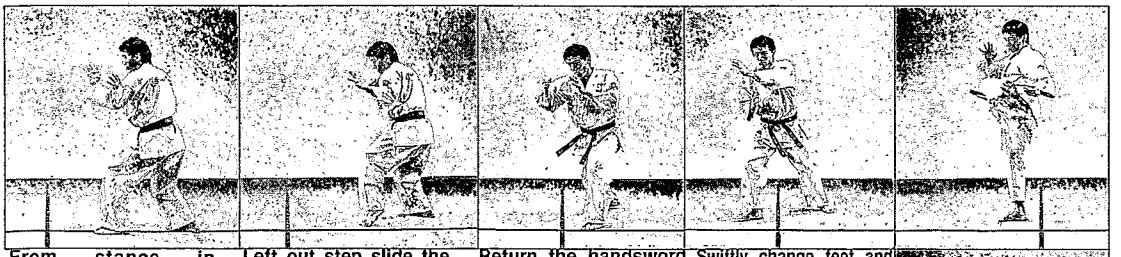
Gradually shorten the step back.

Bring the blocking hand back to guard your face; right punch.



Execute a left middle roundhouse kick.

Move 5 out step•left handsword inside block—right punch—left roundhouse kick [in response to a left high punch]



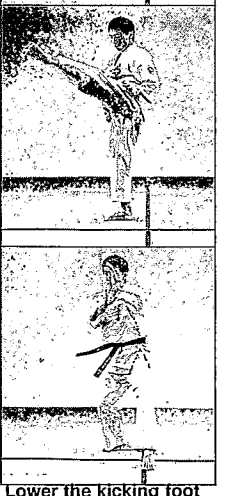
From stance in response to a left high punch.

Left out step slide the right foot back; left handsword inside block.

Return the handsword as face guard as you throw a right punch.

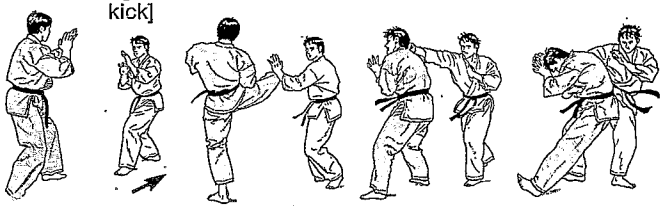
Swiftly change feet and build tension for the left middle roundhouse kick.

Vary the punch from side position [2] between hooks and straights depending on the distance and angle you are imagining. Pull the kicking leg back using recoil from the kick.

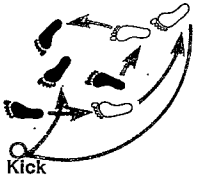


Lower the kicking foot and turn 90° to stance.

Move 6 out step•left outside block—left in step•right punch—right middle roundhouse kick [in response to a right front kick]



Execute a left outside block as you step back with your left foot. Keep your upper body side on, building hip-spring for your right punch.



Kick

Move 5-footwork

Kick

Move 6-footwork

From fighting stance in response to a right front kick.

Left outside block as you step back with your left leg.

Break him to the inside with the block; right punch.

Always bring blocking hand back as a face guard.

Right roundhouse kick as you pull back the punch.

Aim for correct form rather than speed. Use recoil to pull back the kicking leg; return to stance.

Beginners' Kata 1 Moves 7, 8, 9, 10

Move 7 Left out step•left low parry—right low kick—left middle roundhouse kick [in response to a left front kick]

From fighting stance in response to a left front kick.

Step back with your left leg. Left low parry.

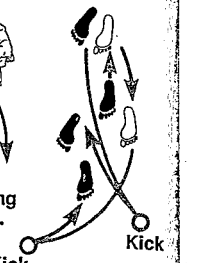
Step in as you do the low parry.

Low kick to th e calf of the kicking leg before it grounds.

Bring your kicking leg down in front, left roundhouse kick.

Kick with the ball of your foot to middle height. Pull your kicking leg in and ground it in front to return to stance.

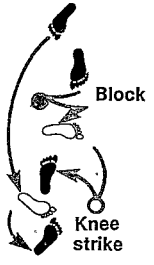
Break him to the inside with a left low parry as you step back. Before his kicking leg grounds, kick at the calf while breaking his balance by pushing his shoulder with your right hand; lead into a left roundhouse kick. Vary the height of your kick.



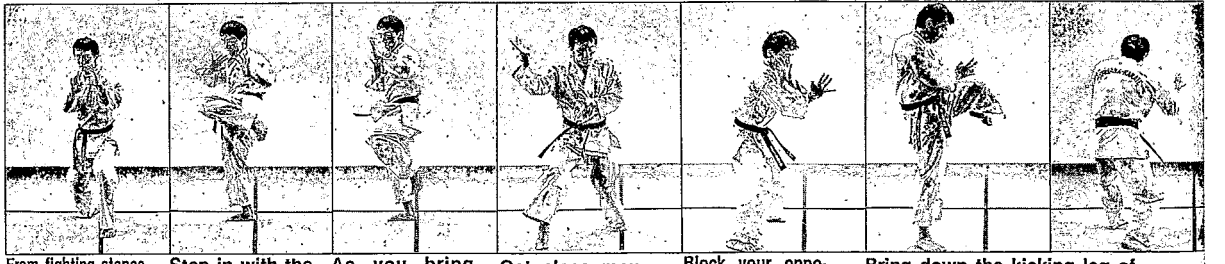
Move 7-footwork

Move 8-footwork

Move 8 in step•left knee block—roundhouse block•close in—left knee strike [in response to a left middle roundhourse kick]



Block with your left knee, getting close to use a circular block while guarding against his punch. As you bring down your blocking leg, switch, moving around to his outside. Practice till this movement is smooth.



From fighting stance. In response to left roundhouse kick.

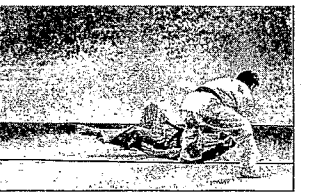
Step in with the right leg, left knee block.

As you bring down your leg move into circular block.

Get close moving your right leg down line (2).

Block your opponent's movements with circular block.

Bring down the kicking leg of your left knee strike in front of you, turn through 180°, returning to your original stance.



Move 9 left double block•close in—right knee strike—forward throw [in response to a right middle roundhouse kick]

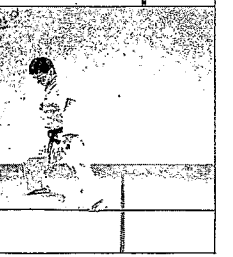
From fighting stance in response to a right middle roundhouse kick.

Left elbow and knee double block.

Bring your blocking leg down outside him.

Pull him close with a circular block, then right knee strike.

Pull the kicking leg back wide to throw him.



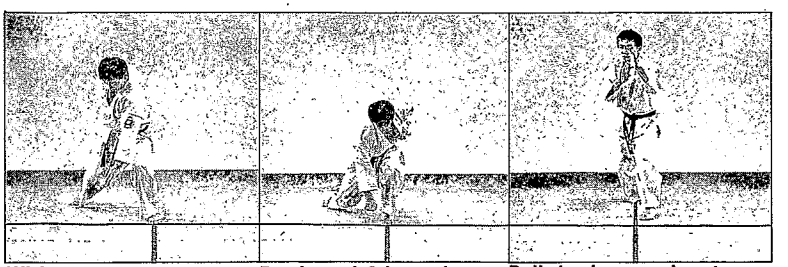
Control him with a knee on his neck.

As you throw him, pull up on his right arm and take up horseback stance, with your left knee (or shin) pinning him down by the neck.

Straight punch to his ribs. Pull up on his right arm as you punch in. Face forward and return to original stance.

Move 10 control your fallen opponent, low straight punch—return to original stance.

●10の挙動のステップ



With you opponent pinned down—right low straight punch.

Bend your left knee, dropping down as you punch in using hip-twist.

Pull back your leg to return to original stance.

• When practicing beginners' kata, initially the step back should be made with both legs transporting you back to a safe distance from which you can block. Gradually reduce this step until you can deflect your opponent's technique while stepping back only with your front foot. Start off with low kicks, keeping good form, then gradually try the higher kicks.

BASIC KATA 1 MOVES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

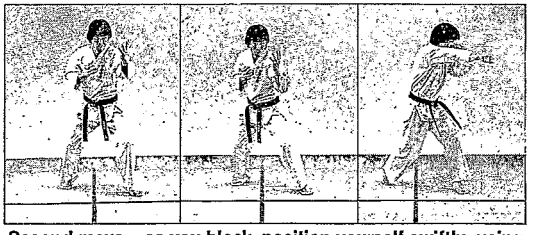
The basic kata are a progression from beginners' kata, where everything begins with a step out before stepping in and positioning. In basic kata, this step out is minimal, position being achieved by moving your back leg down line (3) or (4), leaving you ready to attack while you block simultaneously.

The movements in these control techniques are very simple, but they are performed to provide an understanding of the timing and rhythm of basic control techniques, which are 'step as you block', 'break his balance as you block' and 'break his balance and attack'. Start off slowly, checking your form, balance and use of the hips, then gradually build up the pace until you are moving lightning fast. If you execute the correct block, you will successfully break your opponent's balance.

Basic kata 1 should be at short range.

Move 1

Stance. All kata start and finish from a stance.



Second move—as you block, position yourself swiftly, using your front leg as pivot. When practicing with a partner you can also step out in response to his movements.

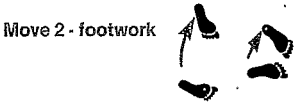
Move 2 left outside block, move to his outside—right punch [in response to a right middle punch]

Left outside block in response to a right middle punch.

Move your right leg down. Guard with your right hand.

Break him inwards with an outside block, throw the right punch.

Return to stance. Your positioning will depend on the momentum of his advance.



Move 3 left outside block. move to his outside—right punch—right high kick [in response to a right high punch]

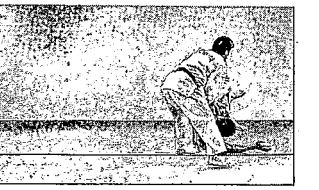
Left outside block in response to a right high punch.

Guard your face with your right hand as you position, moving your right leg down line (4).

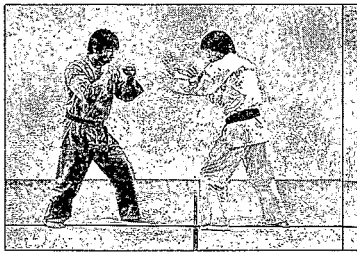
As he is unbalanced by your right punch launch a right high kick.

Bring your kick down in front of you, return to stance.

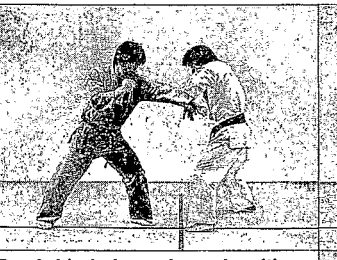
Turn 180° to face the opposite direction.



Move 4 left low parry, move to his outside—right punch [in response to a left middle punch]

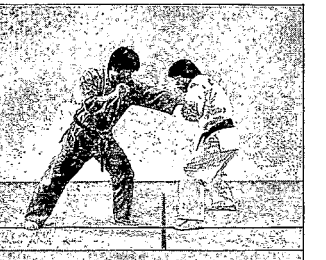


Left low parry in response to his left middle punch.



Break his balance inwards with the low parry, moving your right foot down line ② to his outside.

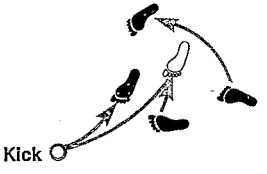
Move 4 - footwork



As you execute the low parry build up tension for your right punch.

Pull back your left hand to cover your face. Return to stance.

Move 5 Left handsword high block, move to his outside—right punch—left high kick [in response to a left high punch]



Move 5 - footwork

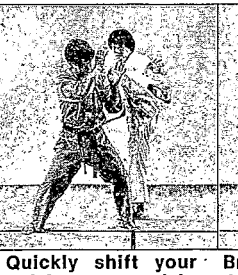
Respond to a left high punch with a left handsword high block; guard your face with the right.

Block with a high block and step in with your right foot to his outside.

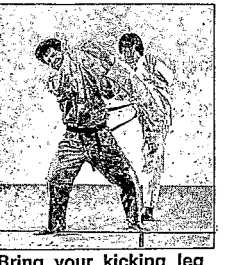
Use your left hand to push against his elbow, knocking his arm inwards and preventing any counter-attacks.

Right punch to the face.

Use the momentum from your punch to step in with your right leg.



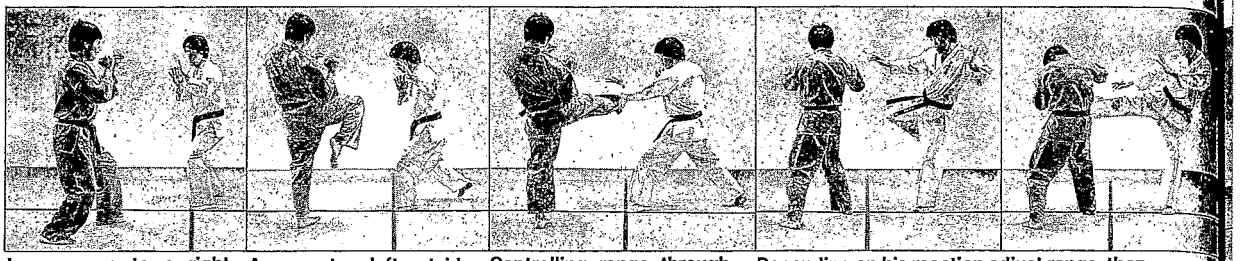
Quickly shift your weight over your right leg, kicking to the face with a left high kick.



Bring your kicking leg down in front of you, face the front and return to stance.

BASIC KATA 1 MOVES 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Move 6 Left outside block, move to position [3]—right middle roundhouse kick [in response to a right front kick]



In response to a right front kick, step out down line ④.

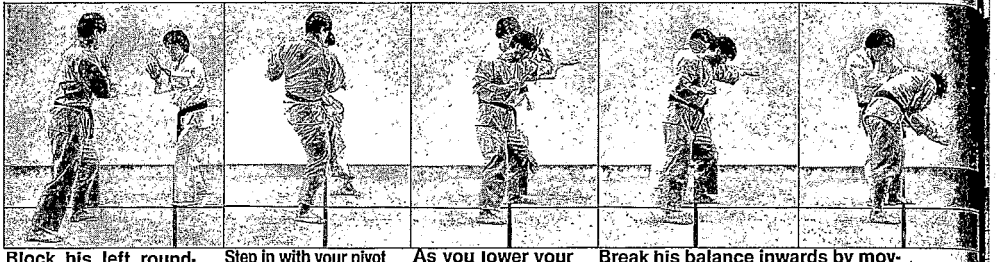
As you step: left outside block.

Controlling range through the pull back (short, middle, long) on your right leg.

Depending on his reaction adjust range, then launch a right middle roundhouse kick.

● Move 6 - footwork

Move 8 left knee block—right outside block, move to position [2]—left knee strike—forward throw [in response to a left punch from a left middle roundhouse kick]



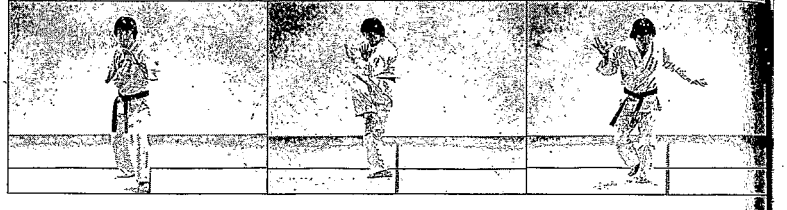
Block his left roundhouse kick before impact.

Step in with your pivot leg, break his balance by pushing him.

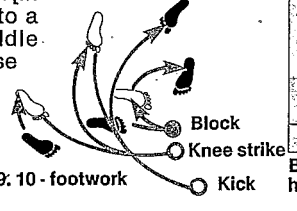
As you lower your blocking leg: right outside block.

Break his balance inwards by moving your right leg down line (2), countering with a left knee strike.

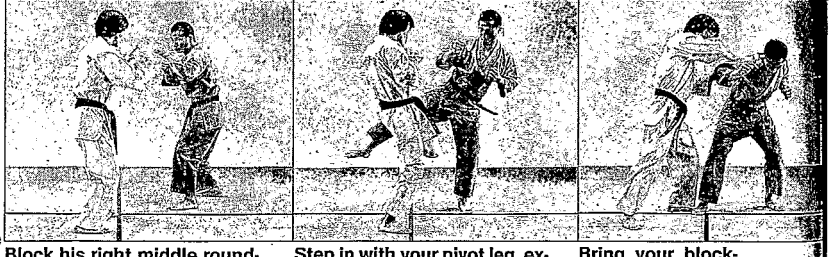
The block and step of move 8. Step in and knee block with the pivot leg to find an infight range, taking position as you close in, and leading into a left knee stike. As you execute the knee block, make sure you don't forget to guard (by pushing or shoving him away).



Moves 9, 10 instep, double block—left outside block—right knee strike—control—right low punch—right round house kick [in response to a right middle roundhouse kick]



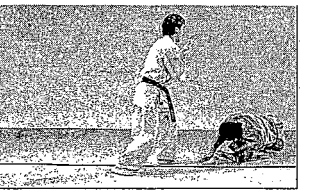
● Move 9, 10 - footwork



Block his right middle roundhouse kick before impact.

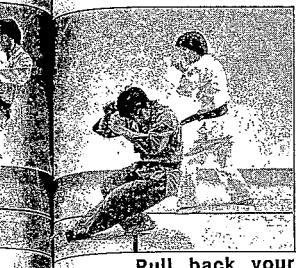
Step in with your pivot leg, executing a double block with your left elbow and knee.

Bring your blocking leg down straight in front of you, then a roundhouse block.

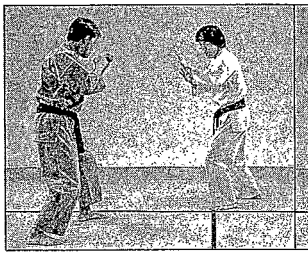


★ Moves 9.10 can be run together

Move 7 left low parry, move to position 2—left middle roundhouse kick
[in response to a left front kick]

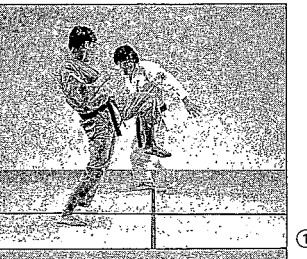


Pull back your kicking leg and return to stance.



In response to a left front kick....

....a left low parry: bring your right leg in.



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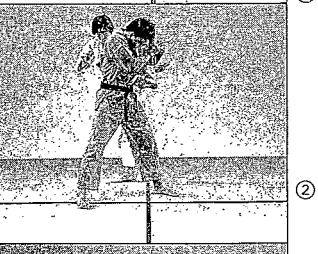
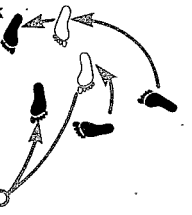
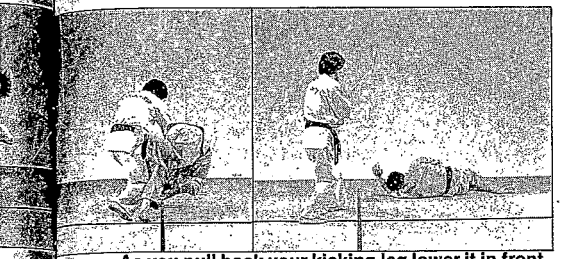


②

③

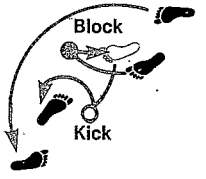
Move 7 - footwork





As you pull back your kicking leg lower it in front, twist your hips through 180° to throw him forward, and return to stance.

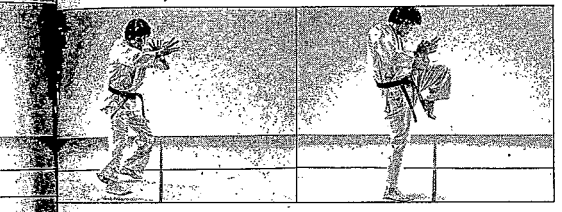
Move 8 - footwork

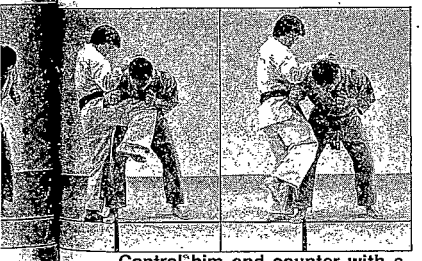


① From position 1 use your low parry to spin him inside.

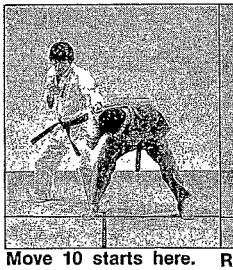
② Control range by pushing with your hands, lining him up for a left middle roundhouse kick.

③ Vary the height of your kick (middle to high) depending on how far his balance has been broken.

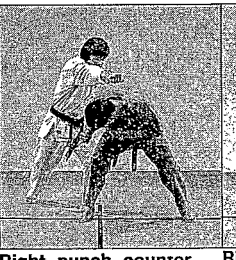




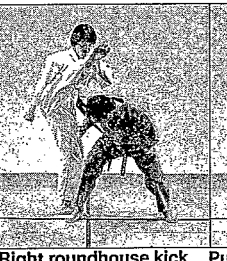
Control him and counter with a right knee strike, turning your kicking leg through 180°.



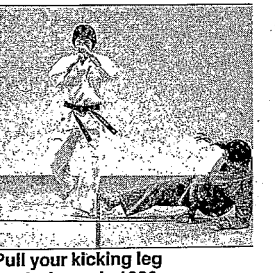
Move 10 starts here. Pull to control him.



Right punch counter to the face.



Right roundhouse kick to the face.



Pull your kicking leg back through 180°; returning to your original stance.

THROWING KATA 3 MOVES 1, 2, 3

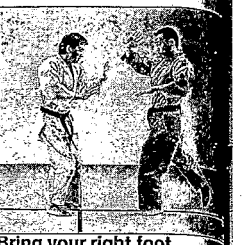
Move 1

Throwing kata place still greater emphasis on footwork, carrying out control techniques while moving in a circular pattern. You throw by describing circles smoothly and quickly and moving in very close. To do this, you combine the four Ashihara karate lines of movement with holding, pushing, pulling and body checking.

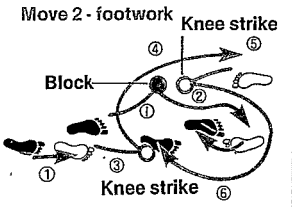
To get close, use any type of counter kick—particularly the knee strike—following the line of your step as you bring your foot down. While you are closing in, all hand movements work as well as punches. For variations, practice using your hands to push or pull instead of punch (throwing kata 3 is carried out at middle range). During control techniques, there are countless opportunities to attack: the moment his kick begins; as he kicks; the moment his blow lands; the moment he pulls; before his kicking foot lands; the moment it lands; the moment before he launches his next attack and so on. There are a multitude of chances to launch a counter in the fraction of time it takes him to carry out each of these moves. As you master kata, you must learn the most effective timing for your attacks. For instance, the knee strike launched as you throw your opponent in a real fight, should be done when he has fallen to about waist height.

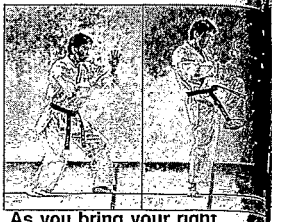
Move 2 step in with the right, left knee block, roundhouse block—right knee strike—right knee strike pull back kicking leg along line 4 forward throw [in response to a right low kick]

Step forward, blocking his low kick before impact.



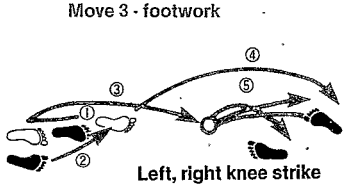
Bring your right foot forward, do a swift left knee block.



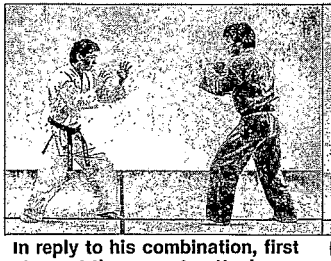


As you bring your right leg forward, launch a left knee block.

Move 3 out step—left outside block, step in with the right—left and right knee strikes while throwing [in response to a right punch from a right front kick (triangle kick)]

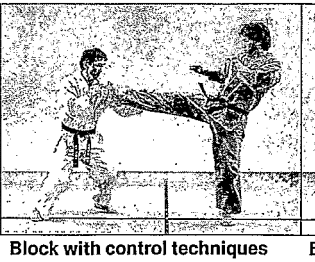


First step back, then get close with a quick cross step. Block his punch with an outside block to break his balance, and get in close before his kicking leg touches down.



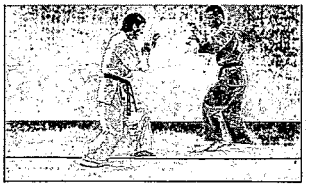
In reply to his combination, first step out then counterattack correctly.

Deflect his right front kick through the out step.



Block with control techniques

Block his right punch with an outside block, breaking his balance inwards.



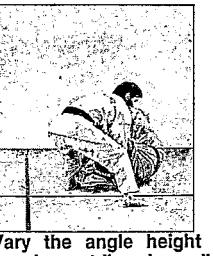
Before your kicking leg grounds, unbalance his with a left outside block and push the back of his neck with your right hand (roundhouse block).

Bring your left leg down to his outside, moving into a right knee strike.

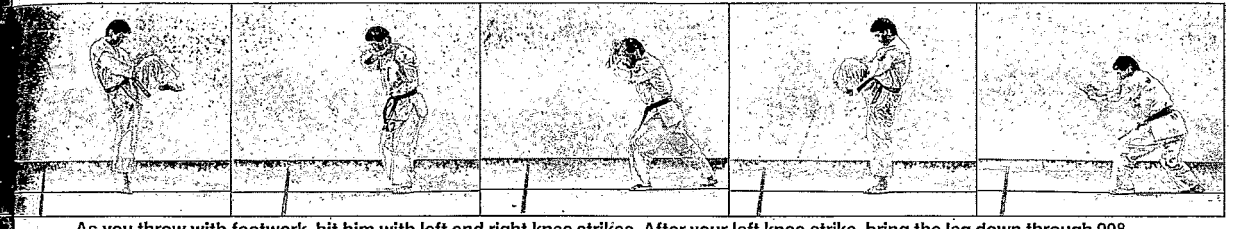
Get in close, breaking his balance with a knee strike.

Pull back your kicking leg for a second right knee strike.

Right knee strike from roundhouse block. Swing your kicking leg around through a 180° arc, moving into a second knee strike. Then twist through 180° to return to your original stance. Keep your pivot leg stable for a smooth circle.



Vary the angle height of your knee strikes depending on his fall and where you bring your kicking leg back. Draw your kicking leg back around line (4) to throw him.



As you throw with footwork, hit him with left and right knee strikes. After your left knee strike, bring the leg down through 90° as you throw him, pulling back your right leg through 90° to wind up for your second knee strike. Pull the kicking leg back in a circle to throw him. Lead his fall and strike as he goes down.

Step across close into him with your right leg.

Control your opponent, hitting him with a left knee strike as you throw him backwards.

Bring your kicking leg down, moving your right leg down line (4) to wind up for your next hit.

Launch the right knee strike as you pull him back.

Move your right foot down line (4) in a circle and throw him.

THROWING KATA 3 MOVES 4, 5

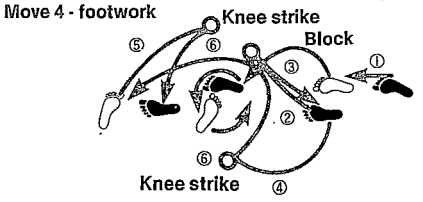
Move 4 left knee block·left hand to control—right outside block—step along line [2] with the right foot—left knee strike—forward throw [in response to a simultaneous left low kick and left punch]

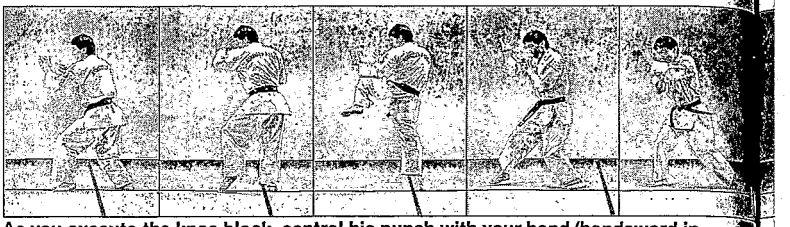
In response to his combination, block with a knee block, get in close and throw.

As he brings forward his right leg, move into your left knee block.

As you block, protect yourself, pushing with your left hand.

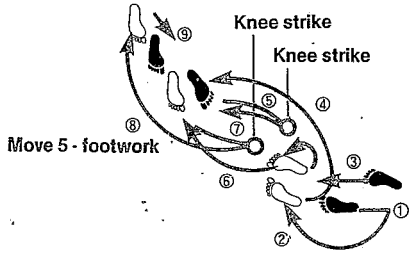
As your block touches, do a right outside block.

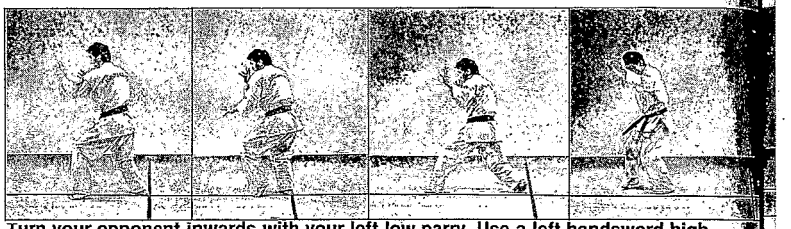




As you execute the knee block, control his punch with your hand (handsword inside block). Bring the block down, switching legs and performing a right outside block to further break his balance.

Move 5 left low parry—(left handsword high block) throw from right in step—left knee strike—right knee strike—throw [in response to a left ponch from a left front (triangle) kick]





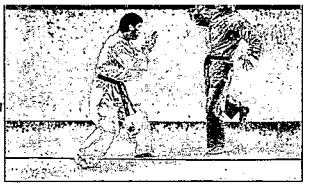
Turn your opponent inwards with your left low parry. Use a left handsword high block to break his balance, stepping in with your right foot to get behind him and throwing him with the footwork.

In response to his combination, get close with a low parry and throw him with footwork.

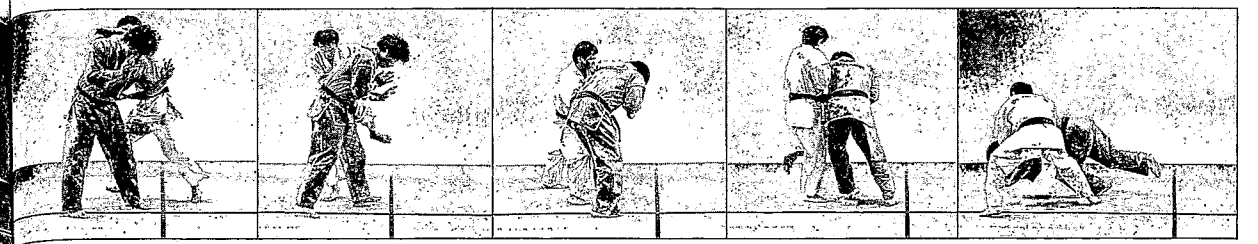
Use low parry and out step against his triangle kick.

Block and deflect his left punch with a left handsword block.

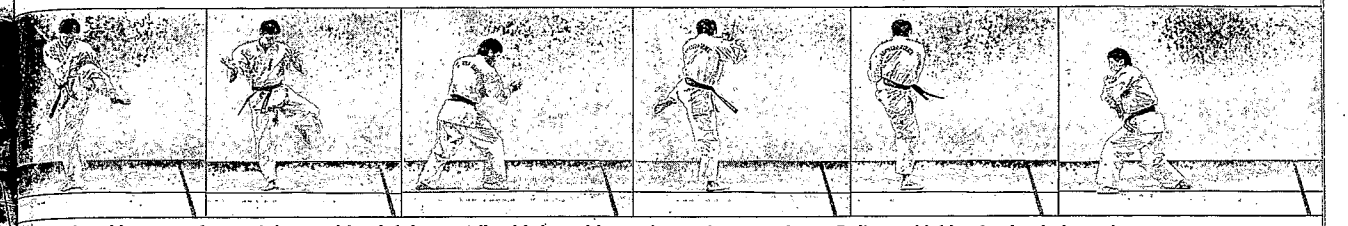
Step in quickly, closing in with a right outside block.



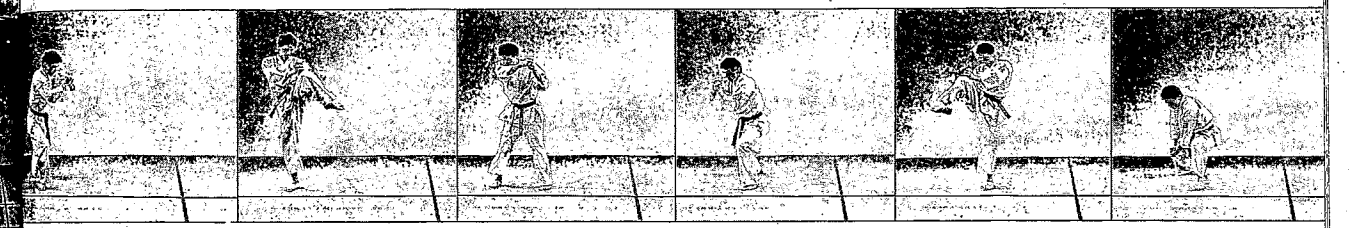
★ Switch from knee strikes to roundhouse kicks for variation



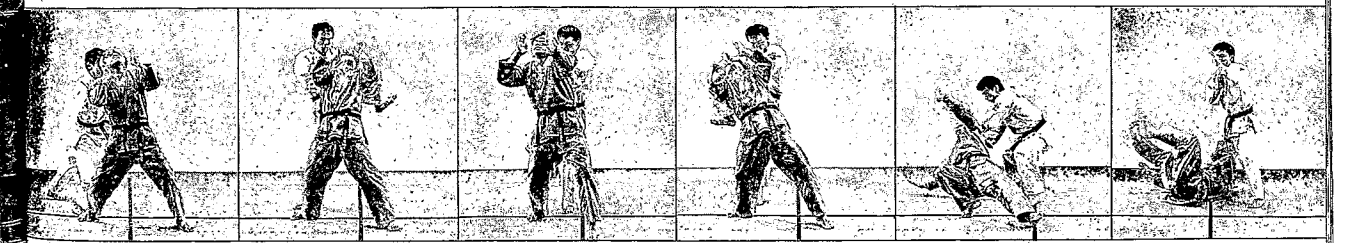
Unbalance him with the outside block. As you turn, pull him onto your left knee strike. As you pull back your kicking leg start the throw. As you throw him down, launch a left knee strike. Throw him using the turn from your kicking leg pull-back.



Lead into your forward throw with a left knee strike, hitting with another as he goes down. Pull your kicking leg back through 360° returning to your original stance. Control him with the hands, and kick your double knee strikes at different heights. Practice slowly, mastering smooth movement in the legs.



As you pull him down backwards, hit him with a left knee strike. Continue to pull, swinging your kicking leg around and pulling him down onto your right knee strike. Turn through 90°, returning to stance.



Control him with your hands as you position yourself. Left knee strike. You can also jump as you strike. As you break his balance, switch legs for a right knee strike. Kick as you pull him back into you. Draw back your kicking leg in a circle and throw him using the hip-twist. Return to stance.

THROWING KATA 3 MOVES 6, 7

Move 6 in step, high block—push up on his kicking leg to unbalance him—right roundhouse kick (middle, low)—left roundhouse kick—right back roundhouse kick [in response to a right high kick]

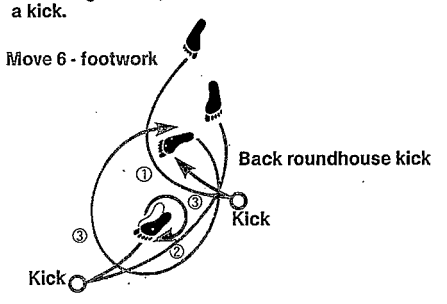
Deflect his right high kick with a high block; attack with a kick.

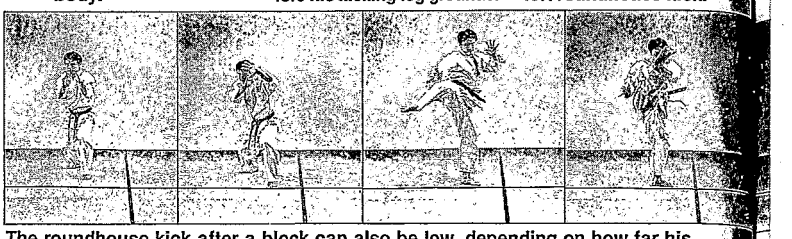
Block while moving in.

Push him back down the centerline of his body.

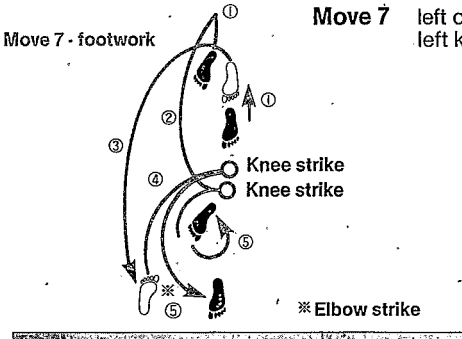
Hit him with a right low (or middle) roundhouse kick before his kicking leg grounds.

Bring your kicking leg down quickly; switch to left roundhouse kick.

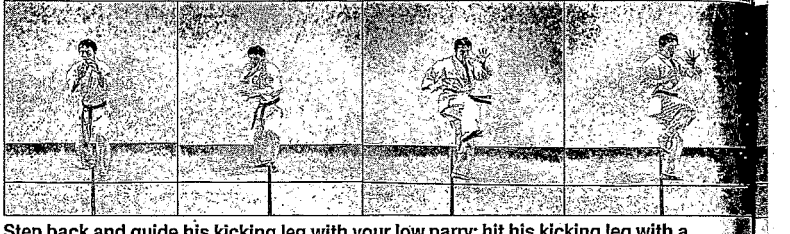




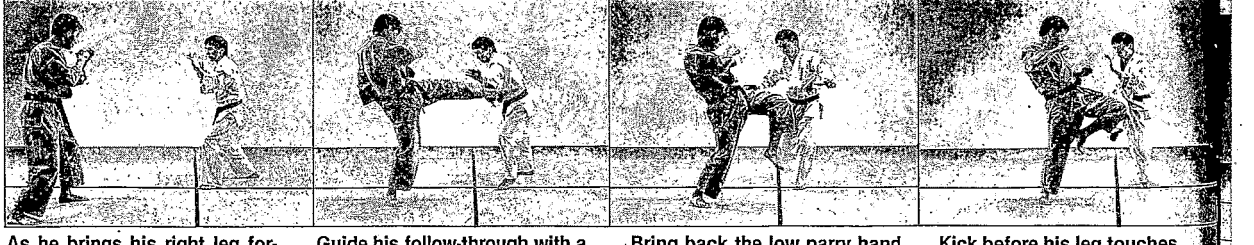
The roundhouse kick after a block can also be low, depending on how far his balance has been broken. Hit before his leg touches down and no later. Kick to his pivot leg, his kicking leg or his ribs/stomach.



Move 7 left out step, left low parry—right hand control, right low kick—stepping throw, left knee strike—right vertical elbow strike [in response to a left front kick]



Step back and guide his kicking leg with your low parry; hit his kicking leg with a low kick before it touches down, spin him around and get behind him.

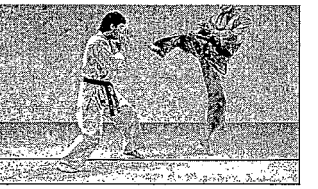


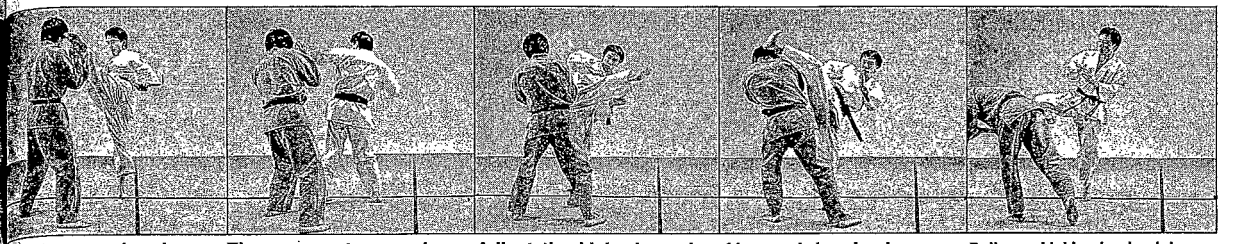
As he brings his right leg forward for a left front kick, step out.

Guide his follow-through with a low parry and control his landing point.

Bring back the low parry hand as a face guard and release a right low kick.

Kick before his leg touches down, spinning him inwards with your hands.





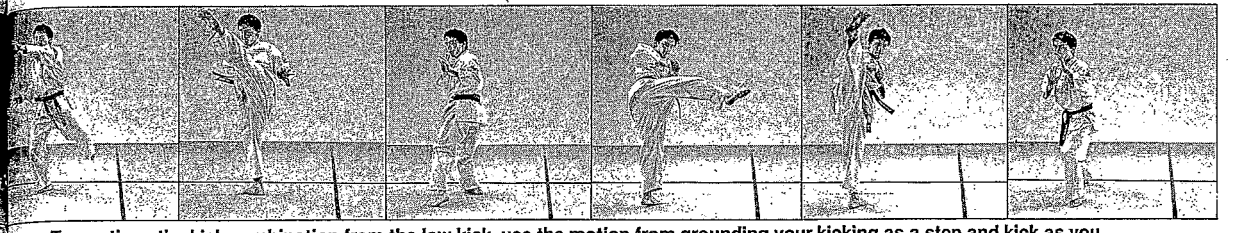
Bring your leg down; move into a right back roundhouse kick.

The moment your leg touches down, use this momentum to kick swiftly.

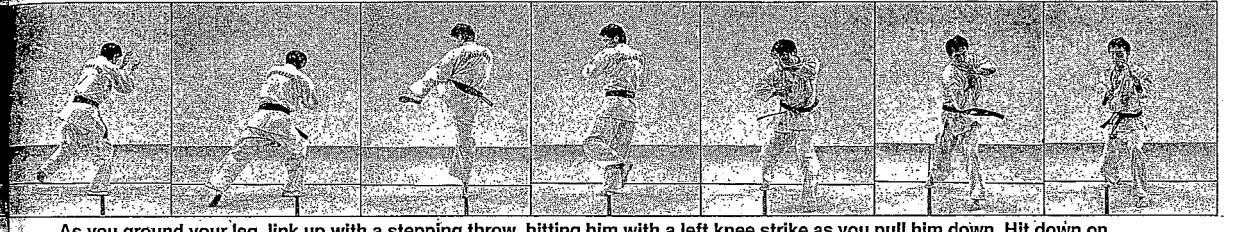
Adjust the kick, depending on range and his posture.

Always bring back your hands to guard your face.

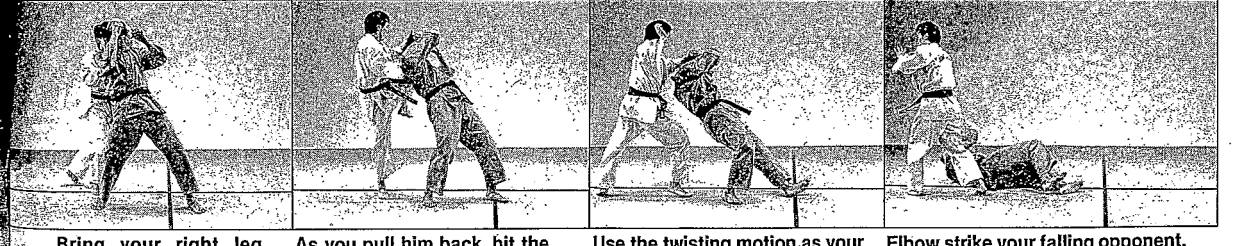
Pull your kicking leg back behind you; return to stance.



To continue the kick combination from the low kick, use the motion from grounding your kicking as a step and kick as you take position. If you don't wreck his balance with your block and first attack, you'll be on the wrong end of a counterattack. Make sure your initial attack hits home! Control distance through pushing and shoving and kick properly.



As you ground your leg, link up with a stepping throw, hitting him with a left knee strike as you pull him down. Hit down on him with a right elbow strike as he falls. Use the twisting motion from grounding your kicking leg to give your elbow momentum. When your foot lands, turn through 360°. Return to your original stance.



Bring your right leg down behind him, taking him by the back of the neck.

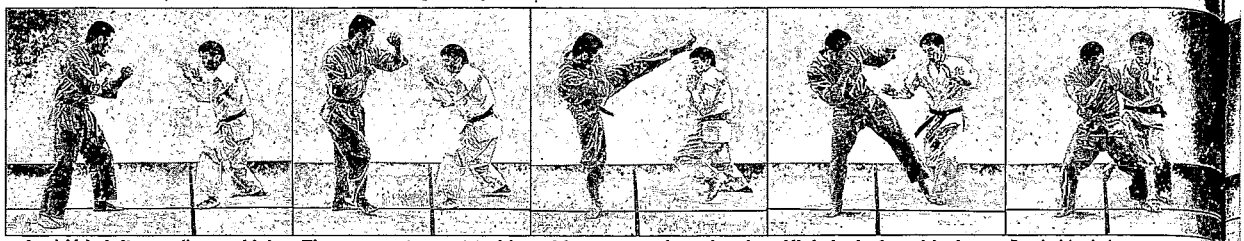
As you pull him back, hit the back of his head with a left knee strike.

Use the twisting motion as your pull back your kick, leading with your left hand for a right elbow strike.

Elbow strike your falling opponent. Return to stance.

THROWING KATA 3 MOVES 8, 9

Move 8 out step, weave—right low kick—right in step (line 2), pull back left (line 3) to take up back position (stepping throw)—left knee strike—throw [in response to a left roundhouse kick]



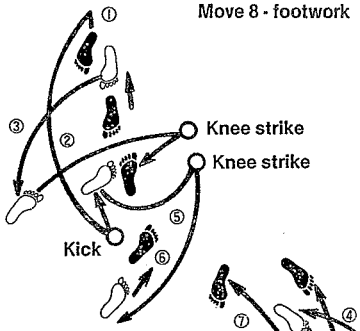
Avoid his left roundhouse kick with an out step.

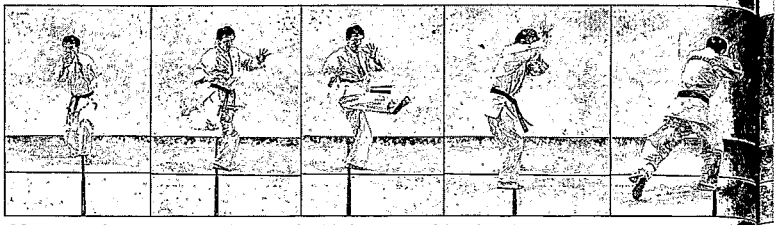
Time your step out to his advancing right leg.

After stepping back counterattack immediately.

Kick in before his leg grounds.

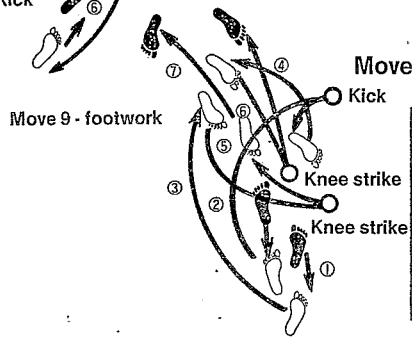
Break his balance with the kick, moving in close behind him.

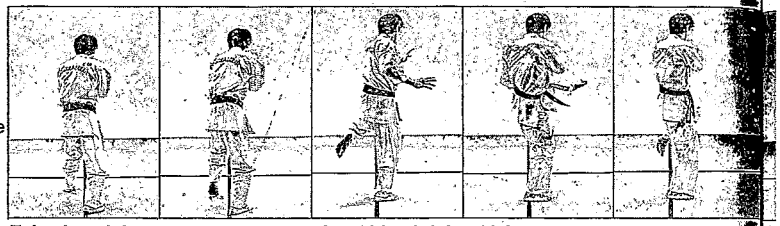




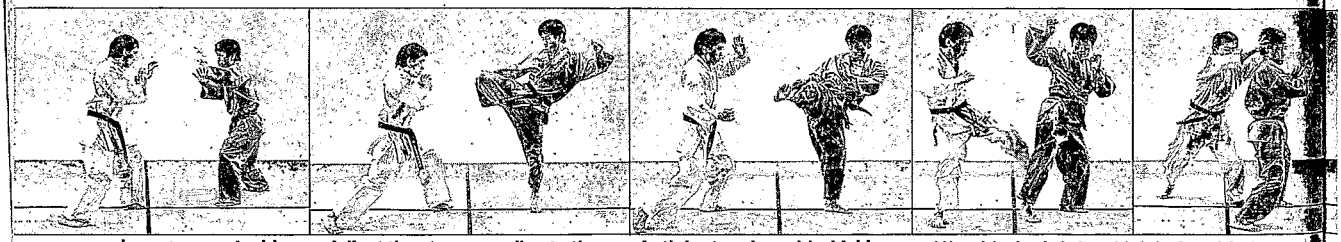
After stepping back, step in quickly, hitting him with a low (slide) kick before his leg grounds. Spin him inwards with your kick to get behind him.

Move 9 out step—left low kick—step along line 1 with the left, 4 with the right for a stepping throw—right knee strike—left knee strike—throw





Take the minimum step out, countering with a left low kick. Put your kicking leg down in front and get close, controlling your opponent and pulling him to you.

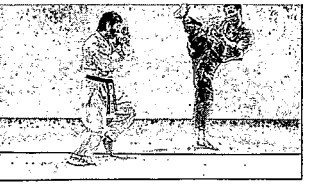


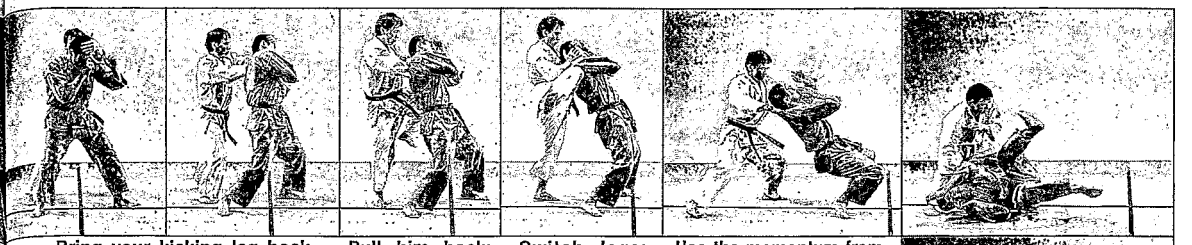
In response to his right roundhouse kick step out.

Adjust the step according to the speed and reach of his kick

Anticipate where his kicking leg will ground, moving up your right leg and launching a left low kick.

Hit with the left low kick before his leg touches down. Bring your left leg down behind him, positioning yourself.



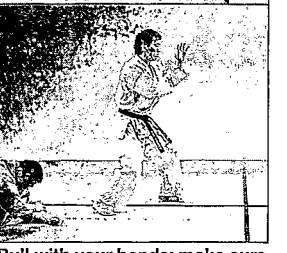


Bring your kicking leg back down line 2, moving your left leg along line 3 for position.

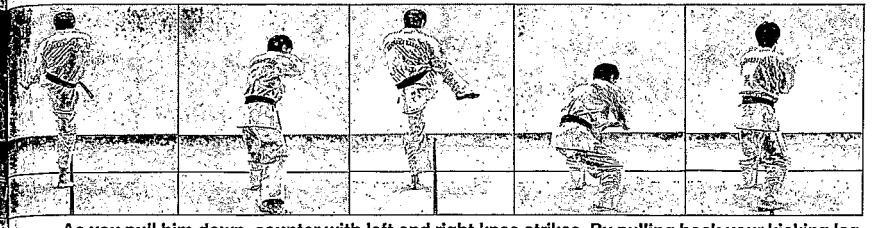
Pull him back: left knee strike.

Switch legs: right knee strike.

Use the momentum from pulling back your right leg to pull him down.

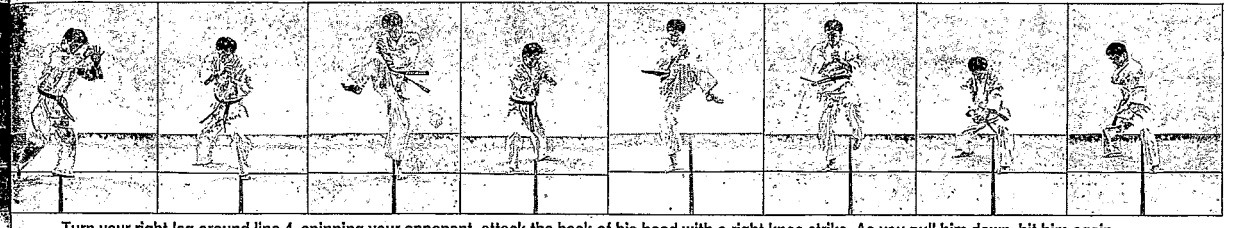


Pull with your hands; make sure his head doesn't hit the ground. Return to stance.



As you pull him down, counter with left and right knee strikes. By pulling back your kicking leg after the second knee strike you can easily throw him. Getting behind him means you can attack him with anything you want.

horseback stance, push his neck against your left thigh [in response to a right roundhouse kick]



Turn your right leg around line 4, spinning your opponent, attack the back of his head with a right knee strike. As you pull him down, hit him again with a left knee strike. Pull him up as you take the horseback stance and push his neck against your left thigh. From this position go into move 10.

Grab his head in both hands, and pull it onto your right knee strike.

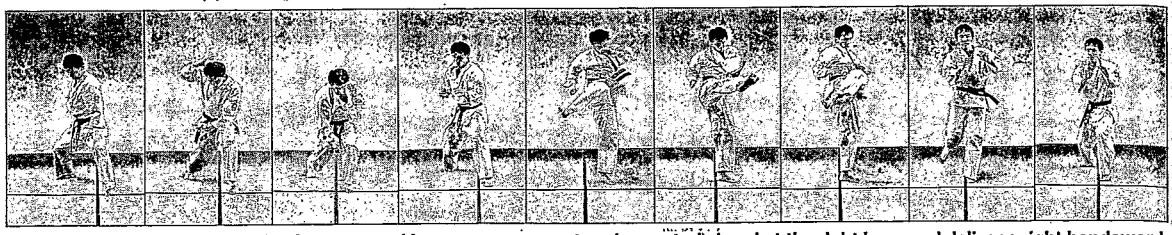
Switch legs: left knee strike.

Control his head; draw back your right leg to throw him.

Assume horseback stance, pushing his head against your left thigh. Go into Move 10.

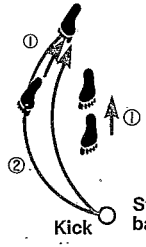
THROWING KATA 3 MOVE 10

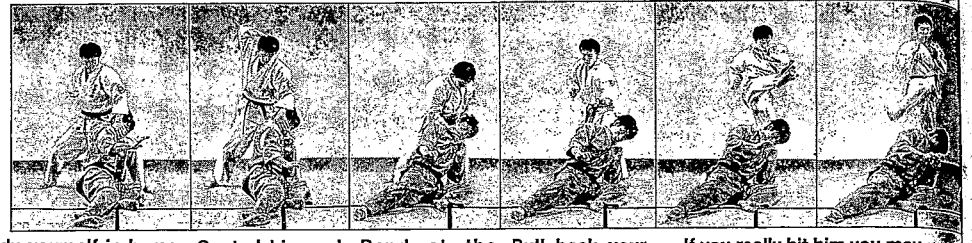
Move 10 right handsword strike—right roundhouse kick—return to original stance [against a controlled opponent]



After Move 9 (you are in horseback stance and have your opponent under control), bend at the right knee and deliver a right handsword strike (to the carotid artery). Step out, giving yourself space for a right roundhouse kick. Pull back your kicking leg, returning to your original stance.

Move 10 - footwork





Steady yourself in horseback stance, side on.

Control his neck with the left hand for a right hand downward strike.

Bend at the knee, dropping your body behind the blow.

Pull back your right leg: low kick your fallen opponent.

If you really hit him you may cause injury. It is enough to understand the technique.

THROWING KATA 2

The photographs in the top corner of each right hand page from page 11 show the movements of throwing kata 2. This is an explanation of the control techniques involved:

Move 1 (photo p. 13) Stance.

Move 2 (photos pp. 15-31)
In response to a right middle roundhouse kick: left knee block—side position [1]. Roundhouse block—left knee strike—forward throw.

Move 3 (photos pp. 33-49)
In response to a right front kick: out step left outside block—right cross instep right hand up under his chin for a backward throw—left knee strike (counter).

Move 4 (photos pp. 51-67)
In response to a left middle roundhouse kick: left knee block from right in step—right leg along line 2 for side position 2—left knee strike—forward throw.

Move 5 (photos pp. 69-87)
In response to a left front kick: out step with left leg left low parry—left cross step to close in—left hand up under his chin for a backward throw—right knee strike (counter).

Move 6 (photos pp. 89-109)
In response to a right roundhouse kick: out step—step along line 1 with the left, 4 with the right for back position and stepping throw—right knee strike.

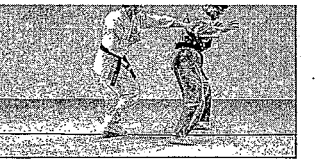
Move 7 (photos pp. 111-135): In response to a left front kick: out step with left leg left low parry—left cross step right hand up under his chin for a backward throw—right knee strike (counter).

Move 8 (photos: pp. 137-155)
In response to a left roundhouse kick: out step—left in step to close—backward throw from left chin strike—right knee strike (counter).

Move 9 (photos pp. 157-175)
In response to a right roundhouse kick: left out step—right instep right outside block (pushing) to spin out him inside and close in—right hand up under his chin for a backward throw—left knee strike (counter)—pin your fallen opponent's neck to your left knee in the horseback stance.

Move 10 (photos pp. 177-187)
Against a controlled opponent: right handsword strike—right elbow strike—return to original stance.

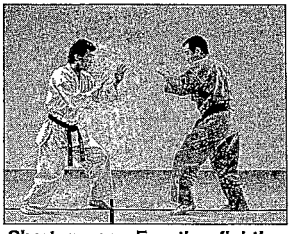
FIGHTING KATA 1 MOVES 1, 2, 3



Whether you use positions 1 or 3 depends on the distance between you.

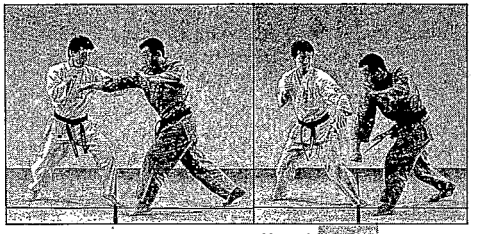
Fighting kata 1 contains all the infight control techniques which anyone hoping to progress from brown belt to black belt must know. From short range, step in to position yourself, then attack with punch and kick combinations.

Move 1 stance



Short range. For the fighting stance lower your hips slightly, tightening your elbows into your body.

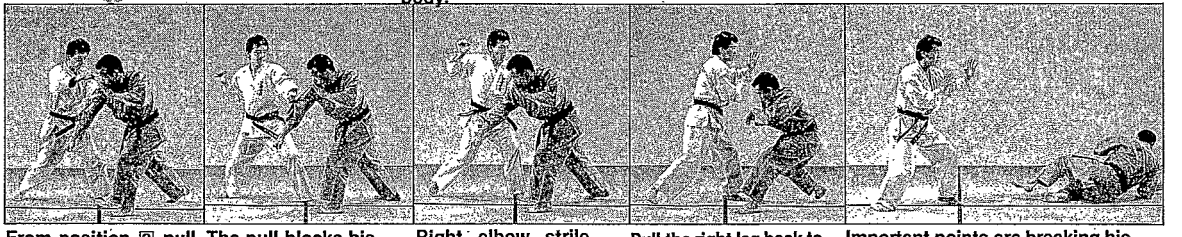
Move 2 left outside block



Block your opponent's right punch with outside block, step down line 4 with your right foot.

Knock his punch diagonally downwards with your block.

—right leg along line 4 for position 3—right punch—right elbow strike [in response to a right middle punch]



From position 3 pull him with the left hand, punch with the right.

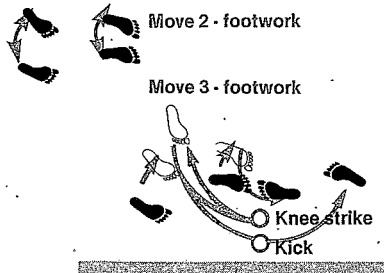
The pull blocks his counter-attack and leads into a right elbow strike.

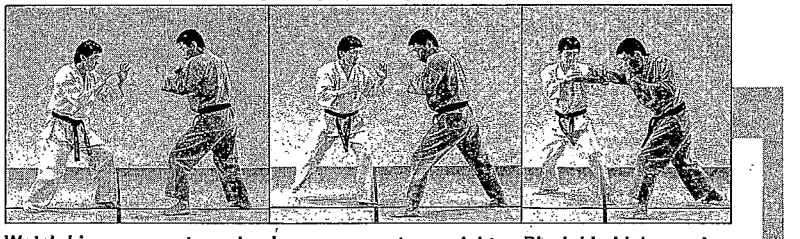
Right elbow strile using leg spring.

Pull the right leg back to stance with hip twist.

Important points are breaking his stance, and the strikes.

Move 3 step along line 4 with the right foot-left outside block—take up position 3—right knee strike—right roundhouse kick [in response to a right high punch]

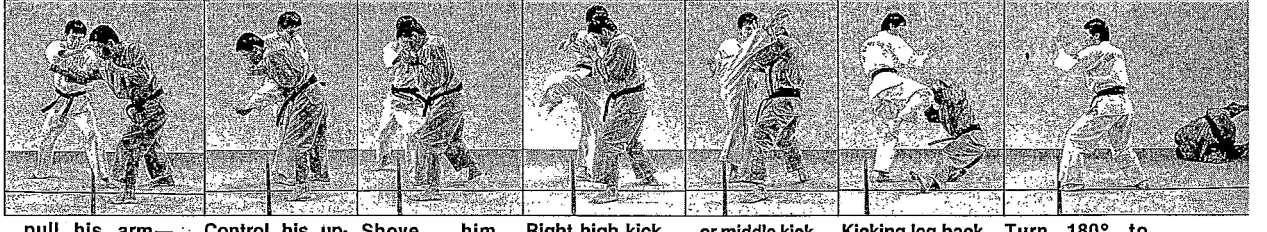




Watch his movements and anticipate his technique.

In response to a right punch, step down line 4 with your right leg.

Block his high punch with an outside block while positioning...



...pull his arm—roundhouse block to close in.

Control his upper body with hands—right knee strike.

Shove him away to adjust range.

Right high kick to the face...

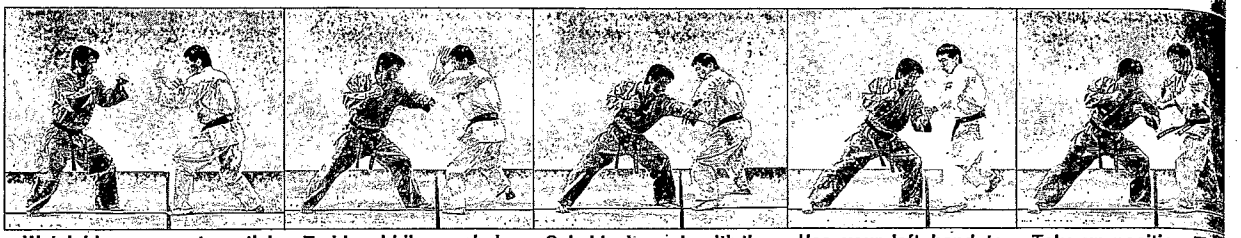
...or middle kick

Kicking leg back and down in front.

Turn 180° to return to stance.

FIGHTING KATA 1 MOVES 4, 5, 6

Move 4 right leg along line ② take position [4] while executing left low parry-pull with left hand•right punch—right elbow strike [in response to a left middle punch]



Watch his movements: anticipate his technique.

To his middle punch: low parry as you step in with your right.

Spin him inwards with the low parry.

Use your left hand to break his balance further: right punch.

Take up position [2] as he responds.

Move 4 - footwork

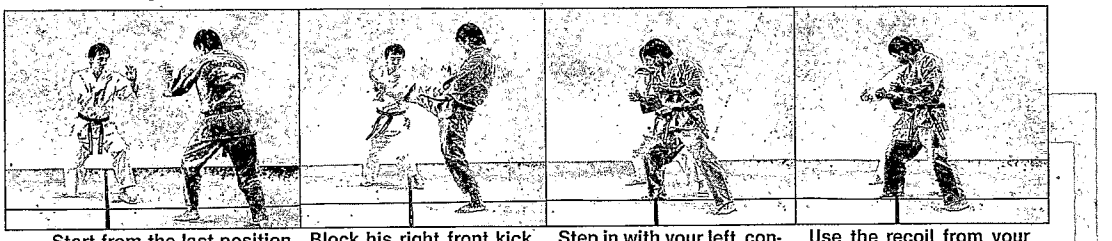
Move 5 right leg along line ② •left handsword high block—right in step to position [2]-left knee strike-left roundhouse kick [in response to

In response to a left high punch: left handsword inside block.

Right leg along line 2 as you turn him inwards.

Control his shoulder with right hand, blocking movements.

Move 6 left outside block—left in step•right uppercut-left hook-right hook-right roundhouse kick [in response to a right front kick]



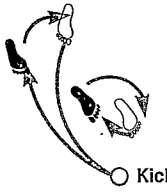
Start from the last position in Move 5.

Block his right front kick with an outside block.

Step in with your left, controlling his shoulder with your left hand.

Use the recoil from your block to swing into a right uppercut.

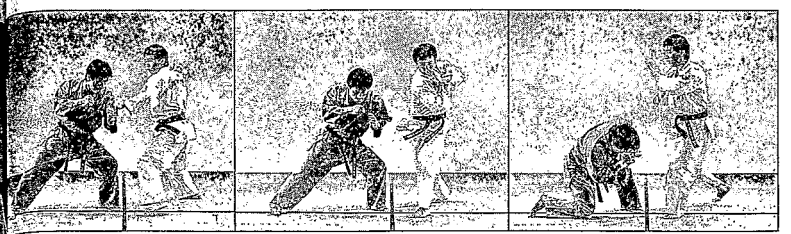
Move 6 - footwork



Pull back your right hand, using the momentum to launch a left hook.

Using the twist of the hips, punch without let up.

Pull back the left hook, swing into a right hook.

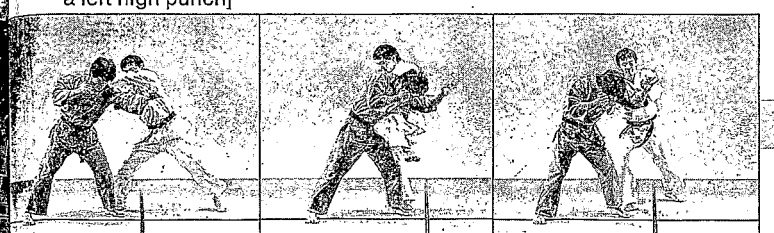


Pull back the punch quickly, pulling him with your left hand.

Right elbow strike. [Keep up a face guard for both punch and elbow strike]

Pull your right foot back to your original stance.

a left high punch]

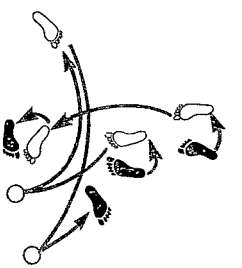


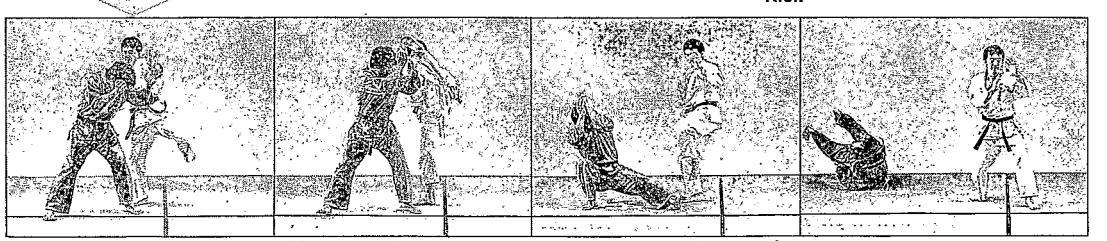
Position yourself with a right instep, pulling back your left leg.

Pull his upper body into you; left knee strike.

Pull your kicking leg back along line 3, building spring.

Move 5 - footwork



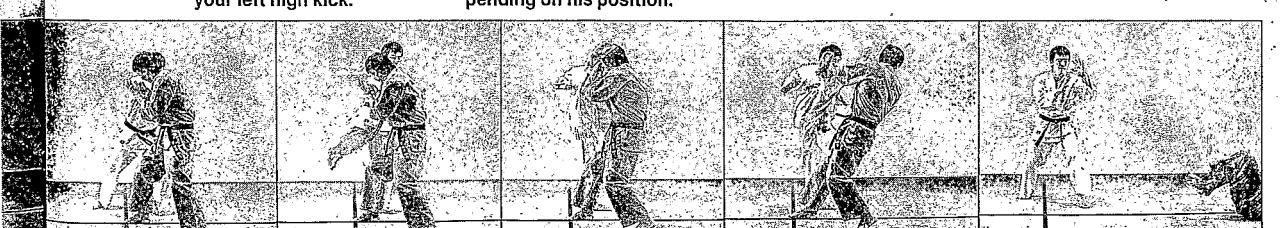


Control range with your hands, lining him up for your left high kick.

You can also deliver a middle roundhouse, depending on his position.

Pull your leg back, ground to front and left.

Return to your stance.



Use the hip-twist from the right hook to launch a right high kick.

Control range by holding and pushing.

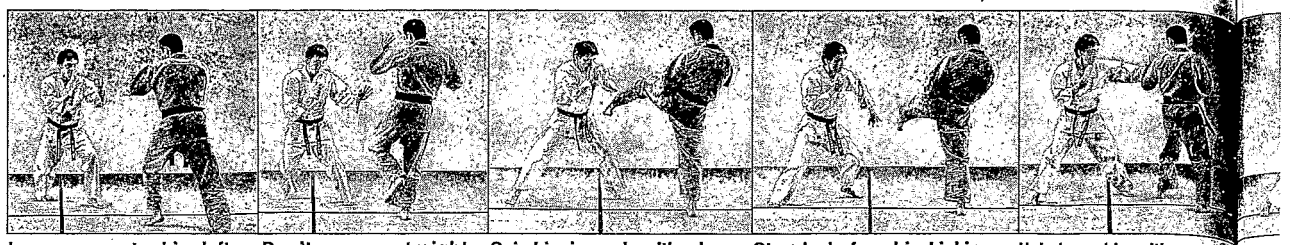
You could also use a middle roundhouse kick.

Don't sacrifice solid punches and kicks for the sake of speed!

Pull back your leg back to your original stance.

FIGHTING KATA 1 MOVES 7, 8, 9, 10

Move 7 out step with both legs•left low parry—left handsword to contol his left arm and right punch—left punch—right punch—right roundhouse kick [in response to a left from kick]



In response to his left front kick, step out with both legs.

Don't move straight back: move round to the side.

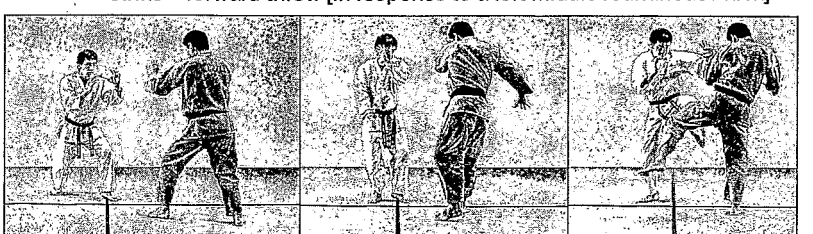
Spin him inwards with a low parry.

Step in before his kicking leg grounds, positioning yourself.

Unbalance him with your left hand, throw a right punch.

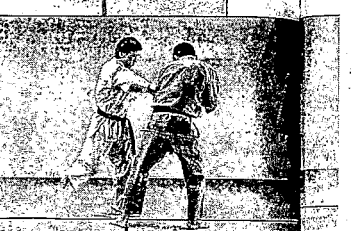
Move 7 - footwork

Move 8 right in step•left knee block—right low kick—close in for left knee strike—forward throw [in response to a left middle roundhouse kick]



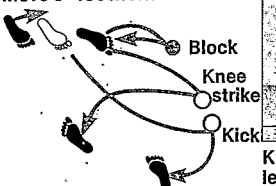
Get inside his left roundhouse kick, step in and throw.

As he brings his right leg in, you step in.

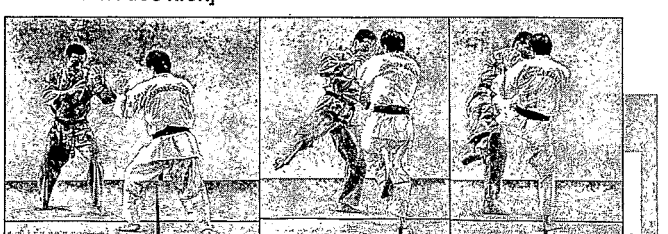


Knee block, using your left hand to break his balance.

Move 8 - footwork



Moves 9, 10 right in step• left double block—roundhouse block—right knee strike—control—right straight punch (low)—right elbow strike—return to original stance [in response to a right middle roundhouse kick]

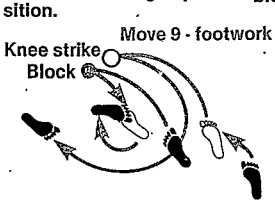


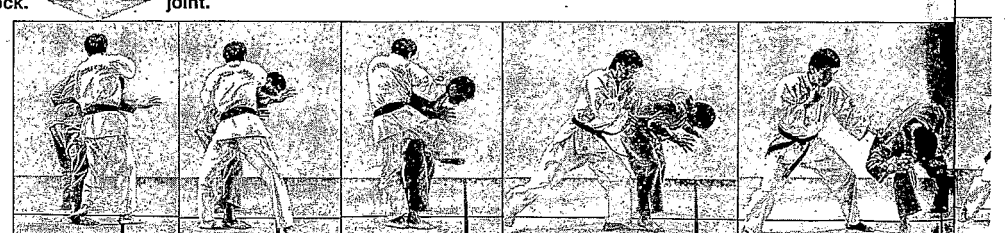
In response to his right middle roundhouse kick, attack from infight position.

From right leg advance: left double block.

Block to the inside of his right hip joint.

Move 9 - footwork





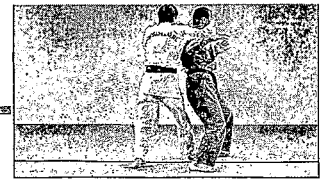
Left outside block against his right shoulder.

Spin him inwards; roundhouse block.

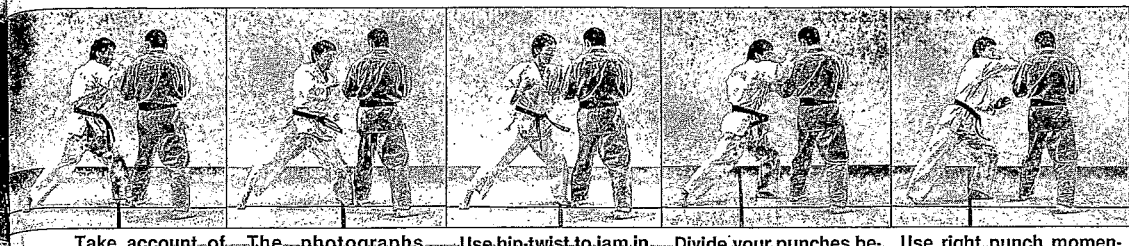
Get close, pulling him onto your right knee strike.

Right leg back down line 4: control his shoulder with your left hand.

Pull and hold him with your left hand.



★ Moves 9.10 can be run together



Take account of range and angle when you punch.

The photographs show a right hook—left uppercut.

Use hip-twist to jam in a third punch.

Divide your punches between face and body.

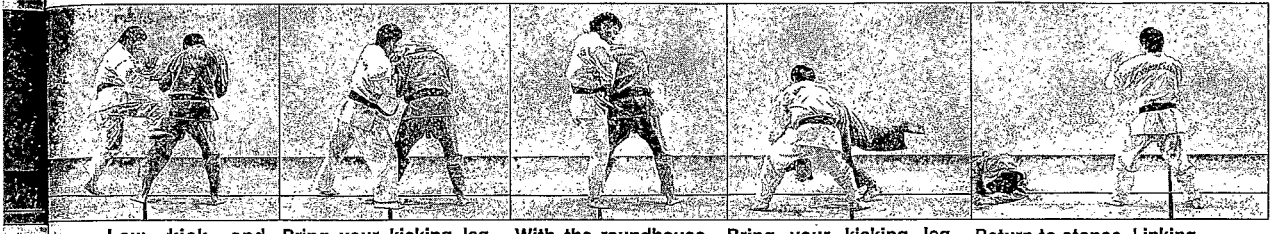
Use right punch momentum to launch a right roundhouse kick.

Right high kick. (Or middle roundhouse kick.)

Keep up your guard; kick with correct form.

Bring your kicking leg back behind to return to stance.

right punch: use right heel lift and right knee-twist.



Low kick and roundhouse block to break his balance.

Bring your kicking leg down to his side or behind him to close in.

With the roundhouse block pull him onto your left knee strike.

Bring your kicking leg around and down, using hip-twist for a forward throw.

Return to stance. Linking techniques after the block are the key.

Move 10 starts from here.

Right straight punch to his face.

Control range by pulling with your left hand, right elbow strike.

Drop your body behind the strike, hitting his carotid artery.

Return to stance.

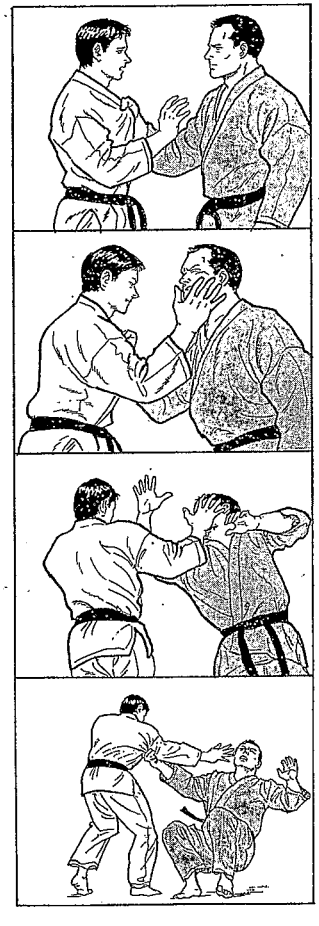
SELF-DEFENSE

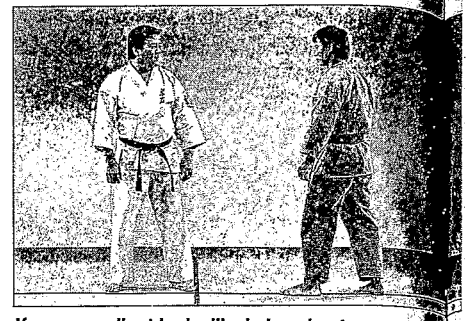
All Ashihara karate contol techniques taught here can be used unchanged in self-defense. In particular, there are many techniques learnt in basic training that can be applied just as they are. No doubt this is because karate was originally developed not for attack, but as a form of self-defense.

In this section I introduce the practical, defensive applications of basic techniques and Ashihara karate control techniques. The 4 pictures below show what I call the "Stop it, please!" form of self-defense. When someone grabs your lapels in an aggresive manner, you politely ask him to stop as you bring your hand up underneath his chin, and hurl him over with a backward throw.

I laughed when I received a letter the other day from someone who had actually used this technique in a situation where he was threatened and had surprised himself with its efficiency.

• Use your left hand to push his arm in, bringing your right hand up under his chin to throw him.





If your assailant looks like he's going to come at you, turn your foot towards him to take a side-on position so you can respond quickly.

Protect yourself with timing

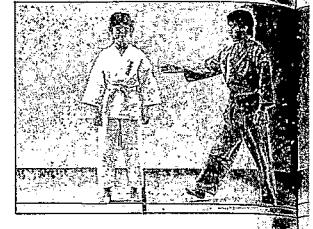
The safest course of action for self protection is to knock your opponent down before he can get hold of you and prevent you from retaliating. To that end, you must judge the instant his attack is coming in and fell him instantly with a counter. As you will have recognized, this is precisely the function of Ashihara karate control techniques. Just use the techniques you have been taught so far. As your opponent comes to grab you, think of it as a punch and, as you would with a punch, kick to his knee joint, or do a stopping technique. From there you just add the Ashihara karate techniques we've covered so far.

Practice self defense techniques in the natural stance—you must be able to protect yourself swiftly from that common position.

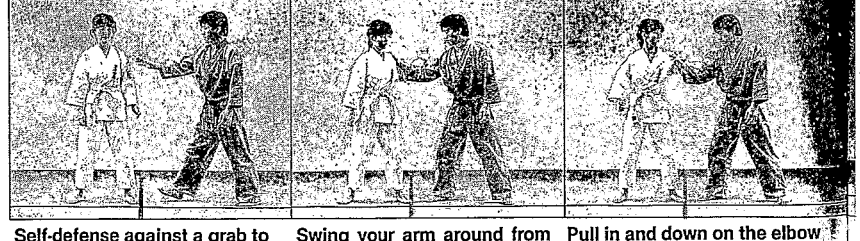
• Groin kick

During control technique training, kicks are aimed at the thigh because of the danger of kicking to the groin, but in a real fight, nothing is more effective than a strong kick to the testicles.

• Joint kick



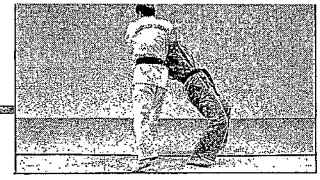
Resistance can be difficult for women, children, and old people once they've been grabbed. It is therefore vital to locate the assailant's weak point and apply a lighting fast technique. Even when kicking, don't aim at the body, where damage is likely to be minimal: go for vital areas such as joints or the testicles.



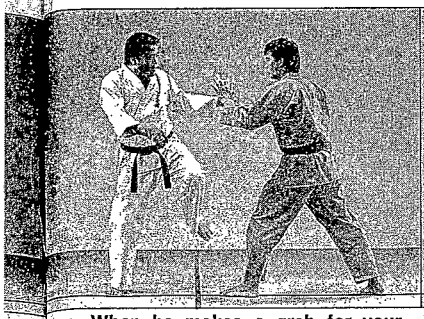
Self-defense against a grab to the left shoulder.

Swing your arm around from the outside, aiming for the elbow.

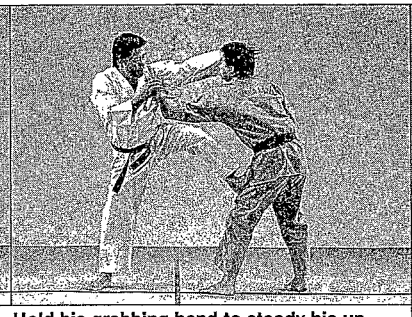
Pull in and down on the elbow to break his balance.



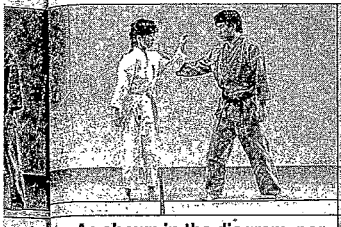
Kick with the heel. You'll cause a lot of damage if you kick through just above the knee. ◀

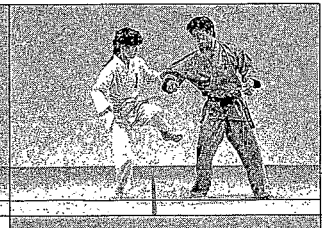


When he makes a grab for your lapel, move to joint kick position and start the technique before you are grabbed.

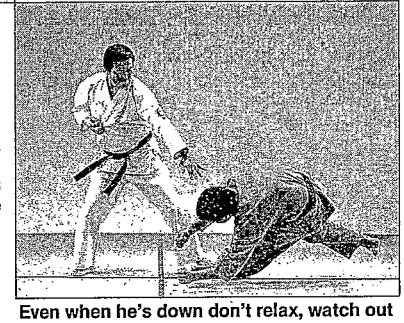


Hold his grabbing hand to steady his upper body and drive your kick into his knee or thigh. If you can, get hold of his head.



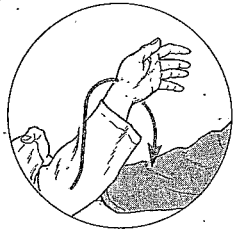


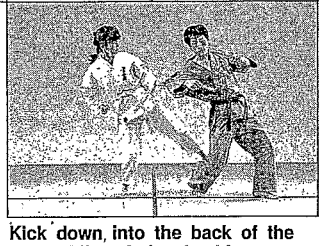
Pulling the arm diagonally downwards as you launch the joint kick.



Even when he's down don't relax, watch out for counterattacks.

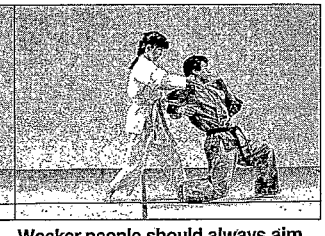
As shown in the diagram, parry the hand to grab behind the elbow.



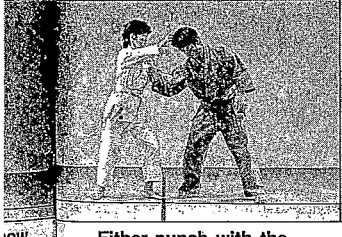


Kick down into the back of the knee while unbalancing his upper body.

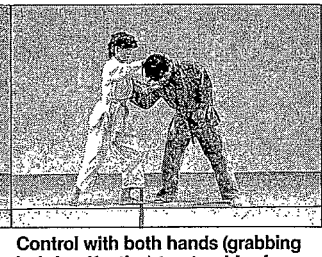
If you aren't strong enough to take him down, punch and kick to the face.



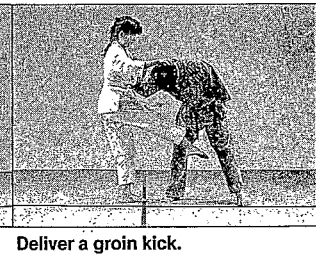
Weaker people should always aim to take the assistant with a combination attack.



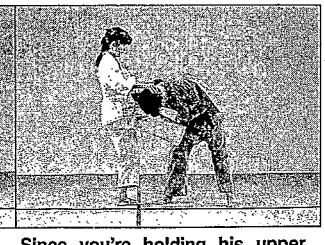
Either punch with the right or grab his head to destroy his balance.



Control with both hands (grabbing hair is effective) to stop him from moving.



Deliver a groin kick.



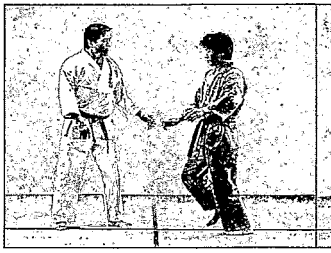
Since you're holding his upper body from above, he'll bend to step in: wide open for your kick.

OUTSIDE BLOCK

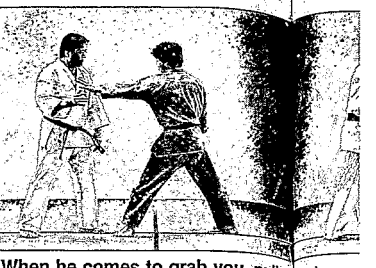
An outside block, carried out as taught in basic practice can be used as a self-defense technique against an opponent's grab at your lapel to bend his arm. It can also be used in its more fluid control technique form to spin your opponent inwards as he tries to grab you. When used to bend the attacker's arm, it involves striking diagonally down on the elbow joint from outside and above—it works well if you aim to bring the elbow of your striking arm down to belt level.

When the technique has been carried through, the assailant will be closer, as his upper body will be leaning towards you, so watch out for head butts or punches!

By continuing to push his now bent arm from the outside inwards, (as for the basic outside block), you'll bend his body over as in the photos below, and there is no way that he can counter. Use the inward turning movement of your left hand to lead your opponent and pull him in towards you and break his balance. Once you've done this you can punch, kick or throw. (outside block ⇨ p.62)

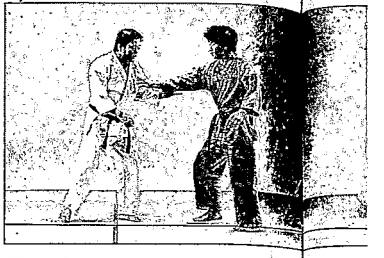


Squaring off. Don't stand with your legs together.



When he comes to grab you, pull back your right leg to give yourself space.

◦ Use footwork to bend his elbow with an outside block

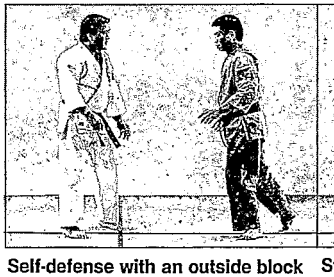


When he comes to grab you: left outside block.

Strike the elbow of his attacking hand from the outside, drawing your blocking hand in and down towards your belt. Don't take your eyes off him for a second.

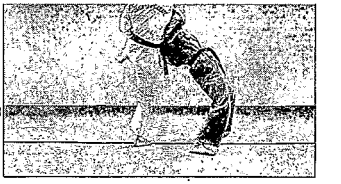
By bending his arm at the elbow, you twist him over, preventing him from counterattacking.

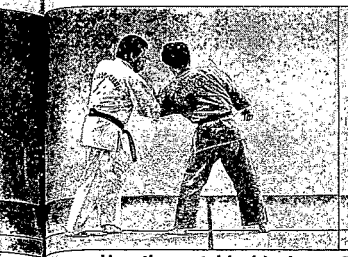
◦ From outside block to knee strike and throw



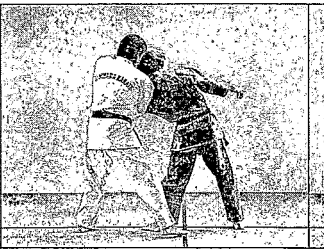
Self-defense with an outside block to a swiftly incoming assailant.

Step back as he charges in.



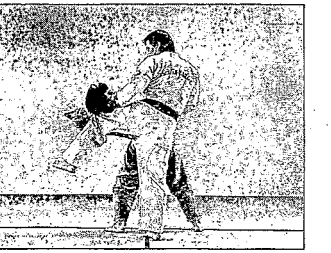


Use the outside block to bend his arm diagonally downwards.



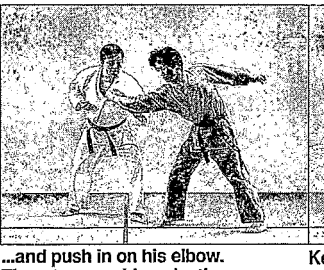
Step behind him to back position and grab his hair.

Pull him in and knock him back off balance with the blocking hand, and the hair grab.



As he goes down, attack the back of his head with a knee strike.

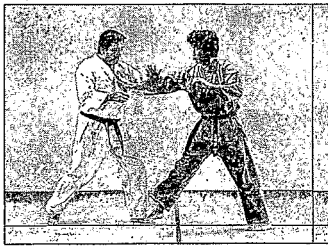
If he gets hold of you, draw your right leg back down line 4...



...and push in on his elbow. The stronger his grip the bigger the upset.

Keep hold at his elbow to control, then right punch and right elbow strike.

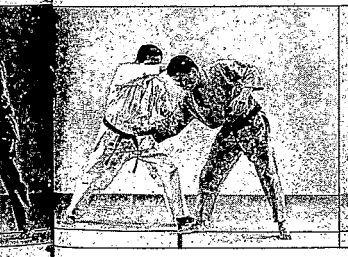
- Outside block to unbalance him, punch to fell him



Left outside block against an oncoming right-hand shove.

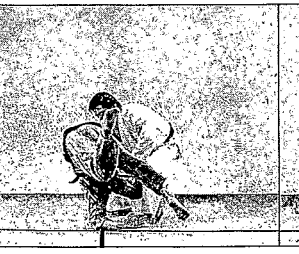
Block diagonally downwards to deflect his attack and knock him off balance.

The instant his balance is broken, move in quickly and punch (or kick)



Block diagonally downwards, step in for a roundhouse block...

...to break his balance; immediately launch a right knee strike to the body.



Bring you kicking leg down line 4, throwing him forward.

Watch out for counterattacks from your fallen opponent. (You can also punch and kick at this point.)

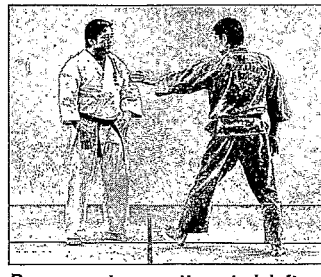
INSIDE BLOCK

The basic points to watch are the same as those used in control techniques.

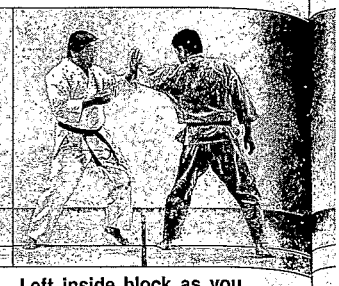
If he tries to grab you with his left hand, respond with a left inside block: if he grabs with his right, block with a right inside block.

The inside block differs from the outside block in that you are trying to knock his attack outwards from the inside, so if he manages to get a good grip on your collar you are going to have problems. You *must,* therefore, carry out the technique before he can get a firm grip, in the same way as you did in control techniqes.

After executing the block, it is a good idea to grab his elbow to control his movements, (Inside block ⇨ p. 72)

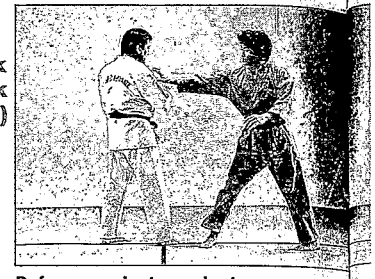


Response to an attempted left hand collar grab. If your arms are loe sweep them up.



Left inside block as you step out.

◦ Counterattack from inside block (southpaw stance)



Defense against a grab at your shoulder from the right side.

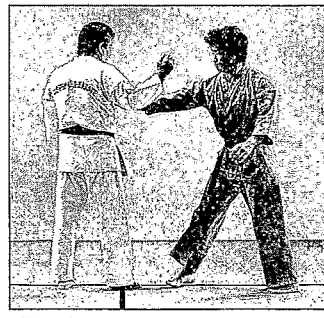
LOW PARRY

If he gets a tight grip on your collar, attack his elbow, dropping your arm down hard in a left low parry.

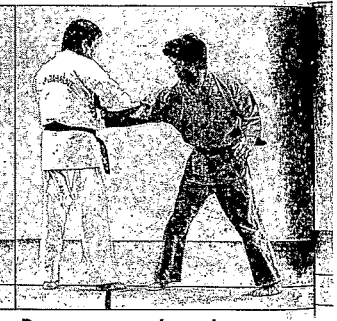
Strike the elbow joint as if to fold up his arm, and pull diagonally downwards to wind him in.

Use your low parry to force him back off balance and grab his face with your right hand with a roundhouse motion.

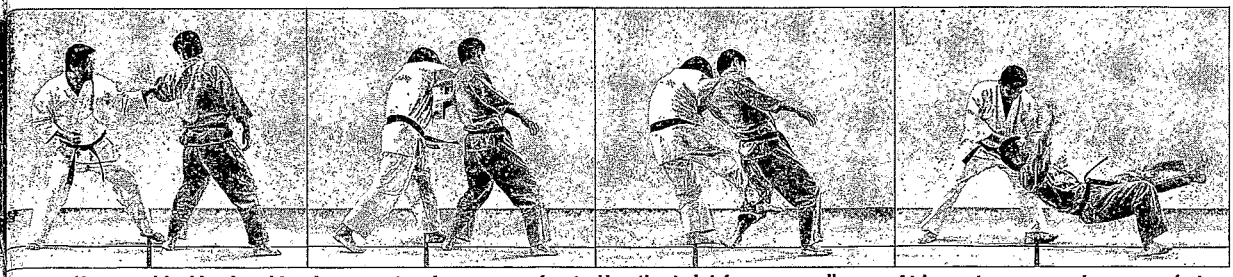
A low parry is used in the same way as an outside block in defense: to drive powerfully down on your opponent's arm, bending it up at the elbow. In both cases, basic techniques are applied. Just imagine the grab to be a punch and apply the control techniques accordingly. The



When he grabs your lapel with his right hand and your arm is already raised, use a low parry.



Drop your arm down, keeping it close to your body.

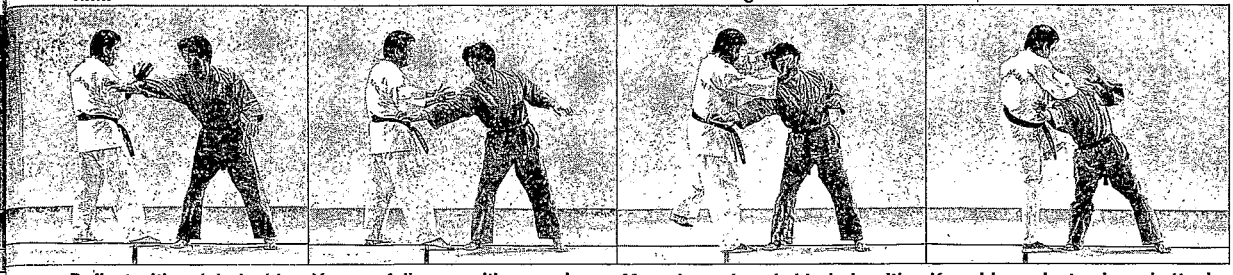


Use your blocking hand to control his elbow, leading him.

As you step in on your front foot, hit the back of his head with an elbow strike.

Use the twist from your elbow strike to kick into the back of his knee with a right low kick.

At impact snap your leg upwards to knock him down.



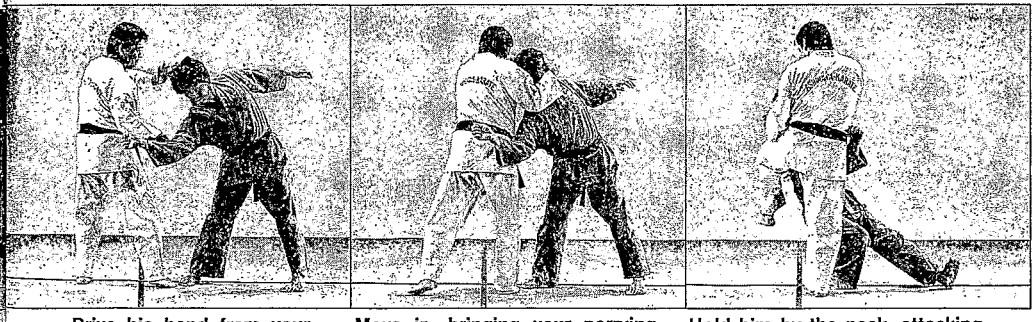
Deflect with a right inside block, spinning him inside.

You can follow up with a punch or kick, depending on which way he goes.

Move in and grab his hair with your left hand, holding his face with your right.

Keep his neck steady and attack the back of his head with a left knee strike.

stronger his grip on your lapel, the greater the damage coused by techniques directed at his elbow. Keep your arms close in to your body, dropping the blow powerfully onto his elbow joint with the point of your elbow.



Drive his hand from your lapel, grabbing the back of his collar with your left hand.

Move in, bringing your parrying hand around to his face.

Hold him by the neck, attacking the back of his head with a knee strike.

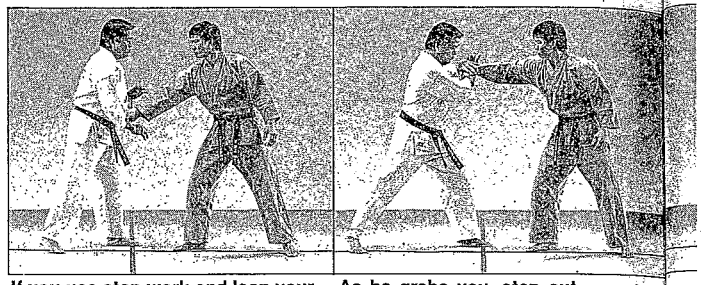
JOINT LOCK

Originally karate involved fighting from a distance, but self defense naturally creates a need for mastering techniques at very close range. In Ashihara karate throws fulfill a central role as techniques for effective infighting.

Through seeking techniques which utilize your physical capabilities to the maximum, one develops an understanding of how to cause maximum damage to joints, which are key areas to attack. If you can successfully attack a joint with such techniques as the joint kick, it will cause a great deal of pain. Among the techniques aimed at joints, that are introduced here is a defensive locking technique (using the turn in the wrist) against the assailant's wrist and elbows.

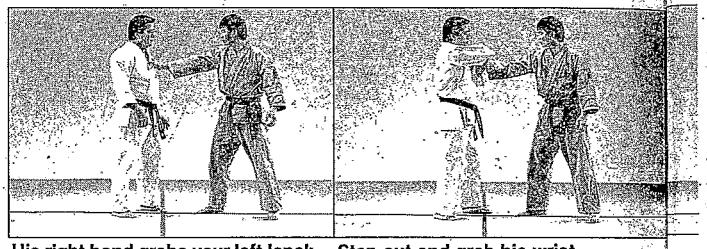
Defensive wrist lock in response to a right hand grab at your right wrist.

Take firm hold of hold of his grabbing hand with your left hand.



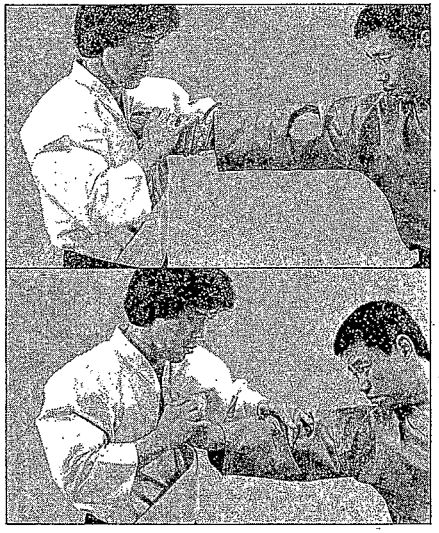
If you use step work and lean your upper body in, the wrist lock will become a lot more effective.

As he grabs you, step out with your right leg to stretch his arm and upper body.



His right hand grabs your left lapel: respond with an elbow bending technique. Watch for his next attack.

Step out and grab his wrist firmly with both hands.

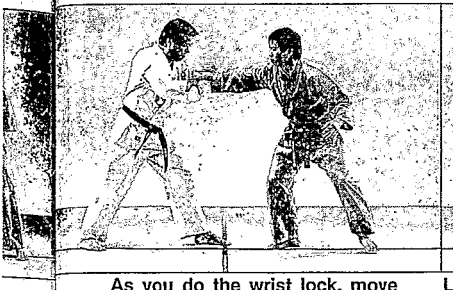


Take hold of the wrist of his grabbing hand, twisting it inwards. Keep his hand in position with your right, pushing down on his elbow joint with your left, and pull the arm in as you lean into him. Important things to remember are to keep your right arm (holding his wrist) tight to your own body, and his hand firmly held. If you don't trap his hand properly, he'll turn *your* wrist, the twist in his elbow will be undone and the whole technique will fall apart.

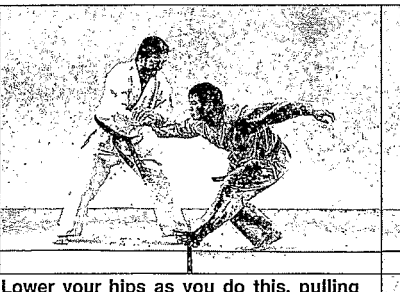
Draw back your right hand, twisting it around (combine with footwork to increase effectiveness).

Don't let him release his grip: turn your right hand and wrap it around his wrist.

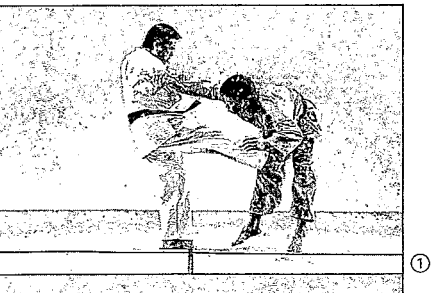
Push down on his wrist. A little force causes searing pain from wrist to elbow.



As you do the wrist lock, move your upper body in and lean your weight on him.



Lower your hips as you do this, pulling him diagonally downwards. This alone causes great pain.



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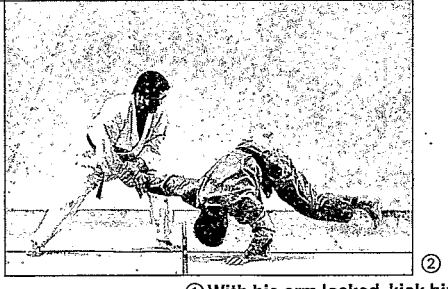


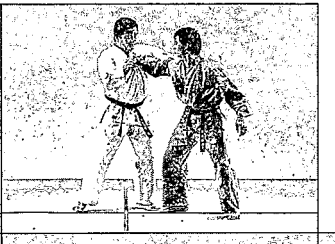
②

① With his arm locked, kick him in the groin.

② Twist the wrist, pull him in and throw him. Keep the lock on to prevent counterattack.

Twist his wrist inwards; close in.

Keep his hand securely in position with your right, moving your left to his elbow.



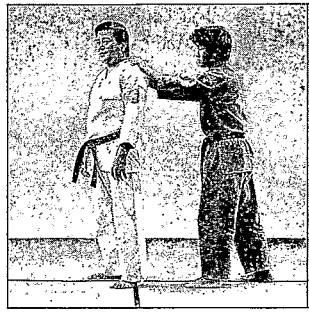
Keeping his hand fixed, push down on his still twisted elbow.

Do it properly and the pain will be so great he won't even think about counterattacking.

SELF-DEFENSE

FOOTWORK

I often describe Ashihara karate in terms of 'circular and spherical movement.' These words contain two meanings: firstly, they mean that you yourself use footwork to move in a circle around your opponent to reach safe positioning from which to attack; secondly, they mean that you spin your opponent inwards, putting him in a position from which he cannot counterattack. Here I introduce defensive applications of both: where *you* move around your opponent; and where you move *him* around. (Positioning ⇨ p. 20)

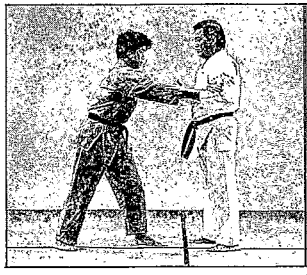


Defense against a double shoulder grab from behind. Act the moment you are grabbed.

Turn on the toes of your pivot leg, twisting around for an inside block.

SPINNING

Often in competition and sparring you will see two fighters grabbing hold of each other, pushing and shoving. This is no doubt due to the body refusing to move through fatigue, but it makes the spectator wonder whether he is watching karate or judo. Seeing that kind of thing amazes me. Why, if pushed, do they just push back? If they just push each other, it simply prolongs the stalemate. If your opponent pushes you, pull. If pulling alone doesn't work, spin him around. If your opponent's pushing you, and you add a little pressure from the side to deflect the direction of his push, you can spin him easily. When defending, if you lose your temper, and just push and punch away at your opponent, you haven't got a prayer. It's up to you if you want to get your face smashed in, but really the important thing is always to size up the situation cooly, working out the best way to fight.



When he has you by both elbows.

Hold both his elbows

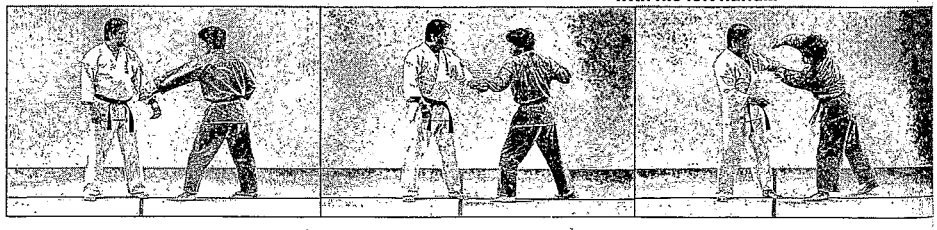
• Turn him as you pull

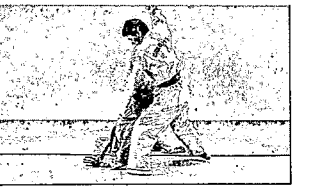
When he grabs your left hand with his as though to shake hands, and moves in on you, pull on his arm, spinning him inwards and breaking his balance. Once you have broken his balance, he's open to punches or kicks.

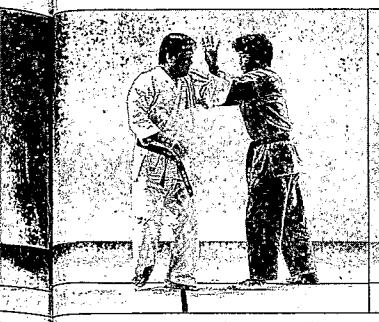
When he grabs your left wrist with his left hand...

• Stop your assailant's attack

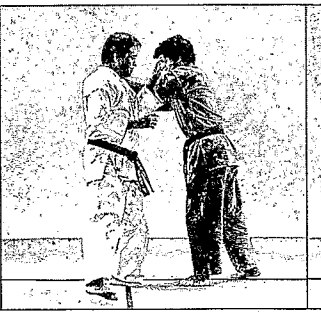
Spin him around, completely breaking his balance: even if he launches a punch, there's no chance he can hit you.





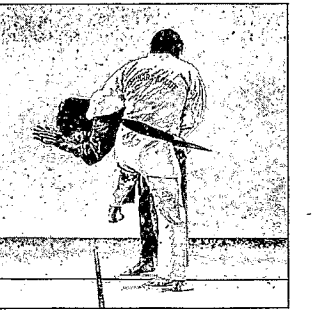


Step out with your right foot, turning quickly.



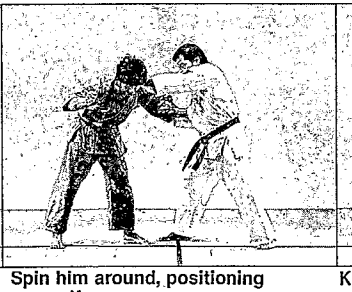
As you step around, hit his arm with a left inside block to break his grip.

Then take up a position from which to counterattack (push him away if you like).

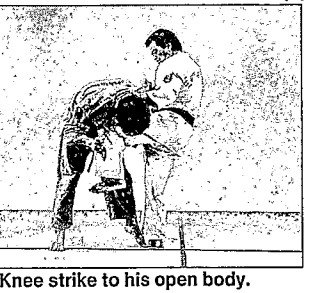


Use your twisting motion to jam a knee strike into him. Don't let up your attack.

Push with your left hand as you pull with your right.



Spin him around, positioning yourself.

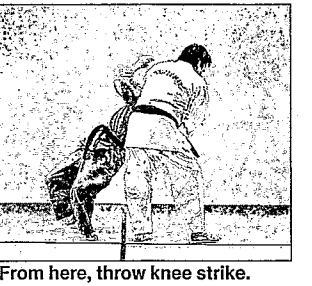


Knee strike to his open body.

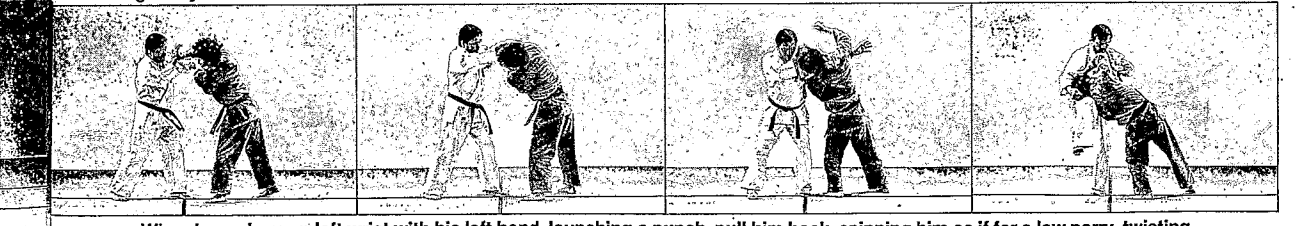
...pull his arm sharply diagonally downwards.

Spin him as if for a low parry.

Grab his collar or his hair with your right hand and pull him in.



From here, throw knee strike.



When he grabs your left wrist with his left hand, launching a punch, pull him back, spinning him as if for a low parry, twisting his body into a position [from which there is no way his punch can land.] Don't drop your guard! If you break his balance, you can hit him with anything.

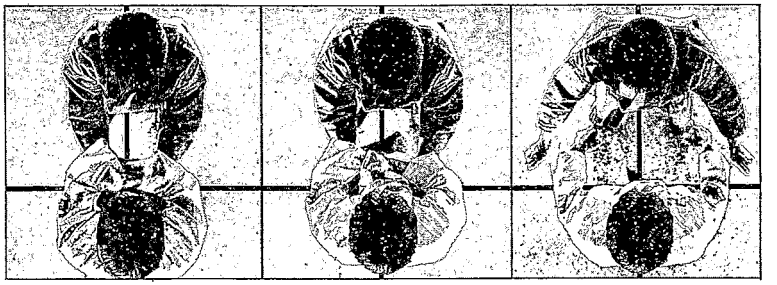
FRONT PARRY

The front parry is often looked upon as nothing more than a breathing exercise carried out after basic practice, but the hand movements involved have a practical defensive application which you should know.

It can be said that during karate training there are virtually no wastefull movements. As I've explained before, there is a reason behind everything. Take, for instance, the hand movements involved when assuming your stance from the ready position: always try to consider why moves are the way they are, and in so doing you will find that the range of techniques at your disposal will expand.

The front parry is used when a large attacker comes and grabs you from the front. The movements used to break his grip on you could be described as a double inside block or double low parry. Without opening up, lead quickly from the elbow.

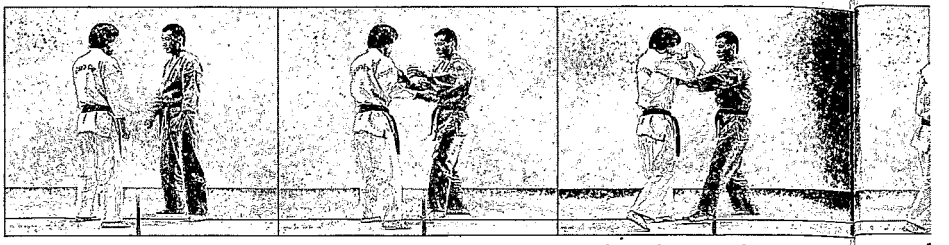
○ Front parry from above.



Front parry against grab at both lapels. Try to control him *before* he grabs you.)

With elbows as pivots strike downwards, knocking his arms outwards from inside.

Keeping your arms in tight, work your forearms between his.



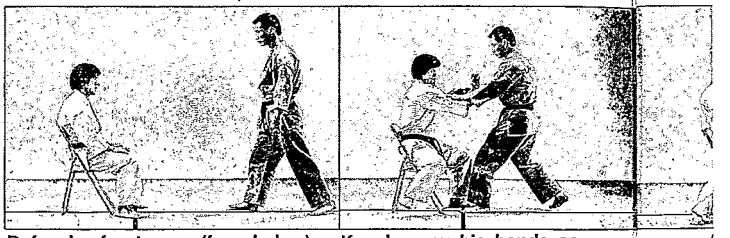
Defensive front parry for attack from the front.

Watching his movements, step out slightly...

...and use the power in your body to raise both arms, then drive them down.

FROM A SITTING POSITION...

If you are sitting down, your assailant standing, you are obviously at a disadvantage. To turn the tables on him, the only thing you can do is to launch a fast attack the moment he has over-confidently assumed you to be a sitting duck. So don't be slumped in the chair: sit with your hips high and weight forward so you can draw back your leg and get to your feet instantly. It is this draw back on the leg that gives spring for your counterattack.

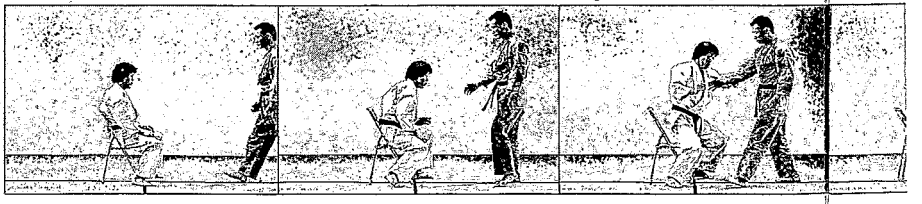


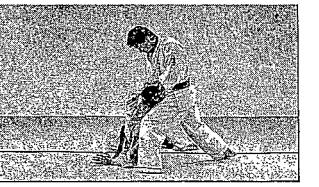
Defensive front parry (from below) from the seated position.

Knock away his hands as he comes to grab (you), drawing back one leg.

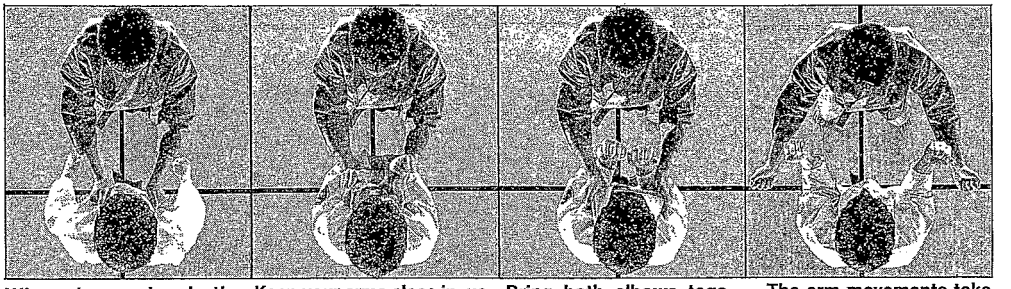
▷ Throw as you get to your feet

Shift you weight forward, pulling back your leg to build spring, then burst upwards, moving to his side. If you don't launch a technique against your attacker as you come to your feet you'll be wasting your time. Always think about speed and balance.





• Front parry from below

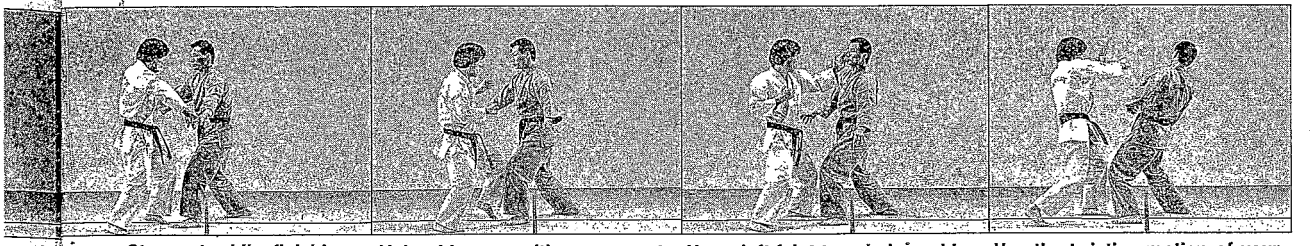


When he grabs both lapels, front parry from below.

Keep your arms close in, using vertical force.

Bring both elbows together, using that point as pivot to knock (his arms shrply) outwards.

The arm movements take the form of a double inside block.

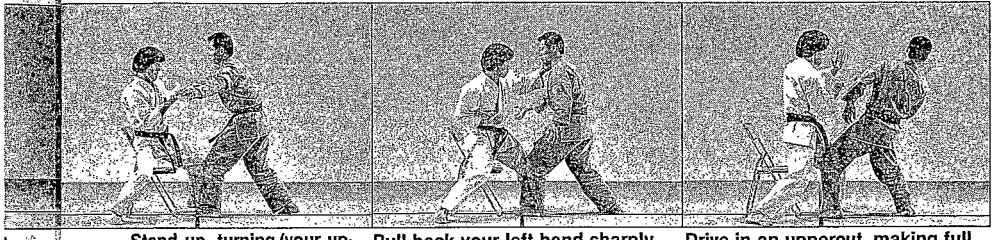


Step out while finishing the technique before he can grip on your lapels.

He's wide open with arms swept out: attack!

Use a left feint to unbalance him further, switching to a powerful attack.

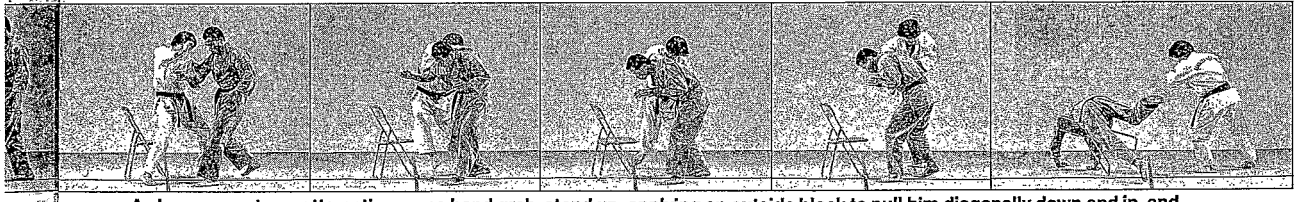
Use the twisting motion of your hips to smash a right punch (or elbow strike) into his face.



Stand up, turning (your upper body) side on to him and counterattack immediately.

Pull back your left hand sharply, building spring for your punch.

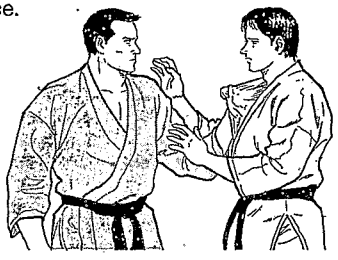
Drive in an uppercut, making full use of hip-twist.

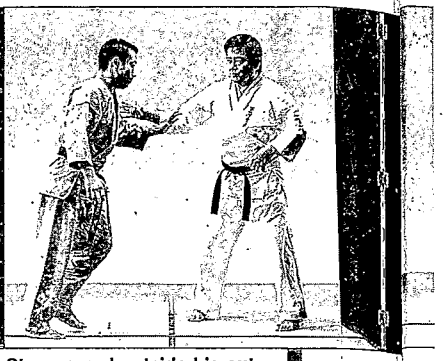


As he comes at you attempting a one hand grab, stand up, applying an outside block to pull him diagonally down and in, and spin him around; take up a side position. If there is anything lying around, throw him into it to cause as much damage as possible.

IN LIMITED SPACE...

What should you do when attacked for no reason in an elevator, near a wall or in some other narrow place? In a nutshell, you should use the limited space to your own advantage. Dodge quickly to the side, defecting your opponent's momentum, and smash him into the wall: a practical application of Ashihara karate positioning techniques. What you have to be careful about is the hardness of the wall and your assailant's momentum. If he is as hard as a wall himself, things could be different, but in most cases you would find yourself charged with overreacting if you smash his head full power into a brick wall. The aim of self-defense is to cause just enough damage to prevent him attacking you again: there is no need to overdo the damage you inflict. Learning Ashihara control techniques should give you an understanding of appropriate levels of force.



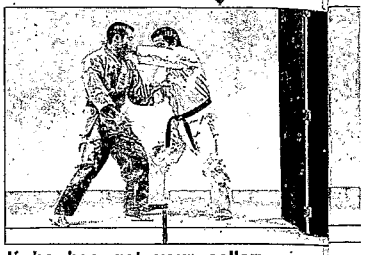


Defense against an attack near a wall. Don't stand with your feet together and you'll find it easier to move.

Step around outside his outstretched hand.

• Throw him into the wall

If you move into him from the outside and use a forward throw to smash him into the wall, you can cause more damage. Since banging his head in is dangerous, roll him forward, ramming his shoulder into it instead.

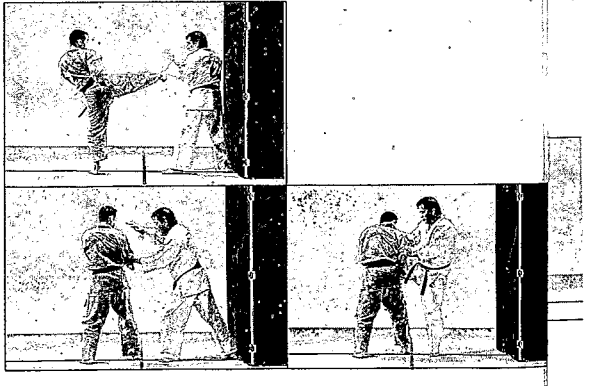


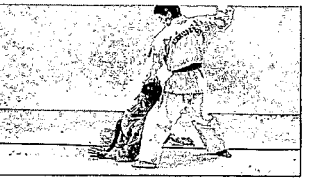
If he has got your collar: roundhouse block.

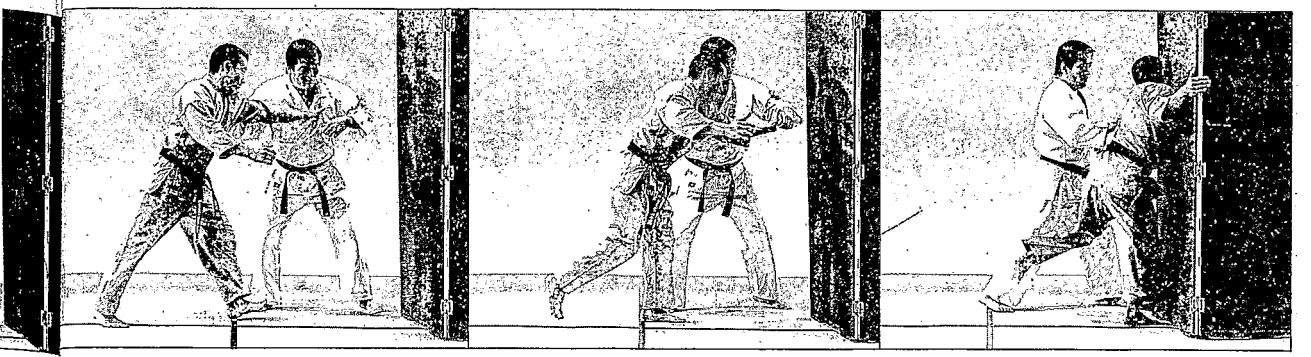
• Defense with minimum exertion

If your assailant takes a strong grip on your lapel, pulling you hard into him, push from the outside against the shoulder/elbow of the attacking hand to twist his body and prevent him from attacking further. If he moves as if to pull you along behind him, push on his shoulder or elbow, when he turns his back to you. In this position it will look as though he is leading you, whereas it's you in control. Even if he tries to turn around, by applying a little more pressure you can stop him. From here you can move into a forward throw or a backward throw. The tighter his grip on your collar, the more the damage to his shoulder, since it is the pivot for your lever movement.

When practicing control techniques close to a wall in the dojo, you can use throws for positioning. Pull your leg back wide to stop your training partner smashing into the wall.



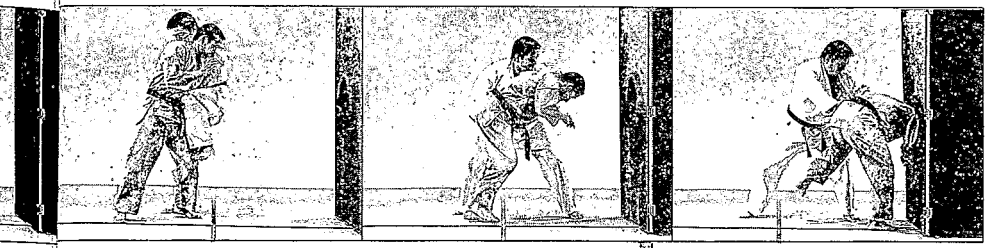




Make use of his own momentum and pull him in to you (as with an outside block).

Pull back your left leg, twist at the hips, and send him into the wall.

Even without adding your own strength, his momentum will smash him into the wall.



Get close for a knee strike.

Pull back your kicking leg to push him on.

Ram his shoulder into the wall.

If it looks as though his head is going to smash into the wall and cause serious injury, pull back your leg through 180° to change the direction of your throw.

Develop the ability through training in control techniques to make such split-second judgements.

After it grounds, pull your leg back wide so you can throw without smashing him into the wall. Changing the direction of his momentum is enough.

A backward throw in control technique training in the dojo looks like it'll send your partner into the wall: pull back your leg wide, twisting at the hips to bring him around into you with the hand under his chin, the throw changes direction.

Afterword

IN PURSUIT OF KARATE EXCELLENCE

- Safe karate!
- Better karate (better form, better balance)!
- Faster karate (up the speed)!
- Stronger karate (up the power)!
- More advanced karate (advanced techniques)!
- Push yourself!

With such aims as these always before me I have pursued my ideal karate. With this book I have tried to transmit what I see as the sheer excellence of karate to as large a number of people as possible.

The scope of karate is limitless. If you expose a weak point for a moment you are down; if you see a weak point in your opponent and grab that chance, you've won. Fast, smooth movements that leave no gaps. Sharp reflexes to take your chance. The strength of spirit to bear the tension of the fight. In karate, together with the physical and technical development of a sport, you have the martial spirit: fell or be felled!

The ultimate aim of karate is to forge a physical and mental balance. If, as I did twenty years ago, you concentrate solely on knocking your opponent down, you will not realize this precious aim. If flattening someone is your sole preoccupation, there are many other methods availble without learning karate. Correctly used, a kitchen knife can become a lethal weapon, but this doesn't mean that a kitchen knife is something that must be employed as a weapon. It is an article with its own definite role to play in everyday life. Karate is the same. It does not exist solely to flatten people: it is a method by which you can toughen and improve yourself.

It may appear to be a contradiction in terms, but in order to know how *not* to hurt your opponent, you must first learn *how* to hurt him. In the karate I teach, techniques are there for felling your opponent, but at the same time, they are techniques to prevent him being injured. If you can get into a safe position from which your victory is assured, there is no need to continue to inflict pain. However, unless your opponent realizes that he has been bested, he may resist forecefully, then you will have to knock him down. He will also have to realize that, having now been controlled, any further attack to him in that position will cause him massive injury. Unless he realizes this, then karate will be reduced to a mere tool for knocking people down and nothing more.

The martial spirit of karate lies in the self-control required not to fell an opponent when you know you can, and the modesty required to know that you can be felled and to acknowledge defeat before you are. If all those who practiced karate would understand this, there would be no need for the embarrassment of serious injury during training.

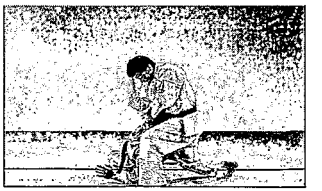
PERSISTENT EFFORT

Karate as a sport aims to help you concentrate all the body's power in the hands and feet as naturally as possible and then to release it to its full potential. With most people their physical potential goes unexploited. It is such a waste. You can revive that potential with just a little training.

Even those possessed of the natural ability required to run 100 meters in 10 seconds could never cross that 10 second barrier, or hope to achieve sush a feat, without making the extra effort. Sport is all about exploiting your own abilities to the full, irrespective of individual aptitude; it is about developing power and speed to the full. Karate is one way of achieving this. In my opinion, karate is the only sport that can bring out your full potential.

Karate also lets you fell on opponent in the blinking of an eye. For instance, when your opponent tries to grab your lapel with his left hand, the moment you are grabbed, break his balance diagonally down with a left outside block, punching him with your right hand. What takes several lines to write down here can, through training, be executed in a split-second. Through more training, you will learn the use of footwork. Then with still more training you will learn how to position yourself at the same time. Put simply, you can use both hands and feet in all kinds of different movements in a split second to achieve a single end. Combining a number of small movements using different parts of the entire body, you can concentrate them into a formidable force. Time this power with your opponent's movements and the power is still greater. Knock him off balance by using his movements and by still using his own momentum to bring him onto your counter, you increase this power to devastating proportions.

I know people who previously couldn't even spell the word *sport* who have, through Ashihara karate, learnt to perform these split-second maneuvers with ease. I have



seen many examples of such transformations. The people involved were only able to do that because they understood the objectives I spelt out at the beginning of this section, and patiently challenged *themselves* to reach one goal after another. I, too, over the past twenty years have done precisely this—challenged myself and attained one goal ater the other.

IF PUSHING WON'T WORK, PULL.

In my previous volume *Fighting Karate,* I explained the nature of movement in real fights and the nature of control techniques.

In this book, I have tried to explain, for the benefit of those who just want to know what karate is all about, the nature of Ashihara karate. Here you will find condensed the essence of Ashihara karate. Those who have read my previous volume will be able to see again that control techniques involve sensible movements that can be performed by anyone who is willing to train. I hope that from this book they will realize now what it is that has been wrong with their control techniques. Still others who are reading my books for the first time will hopefully learn from this volume how closely basics are linked with real fight techniques.

The clues to karate control techniques are contained within the movements we all make in everyday life. Split-second tension and relaxation; the forward weight shift which enables us to walk; our balance. We all know from everyday life experience how to control and adjust our body movement. What you must do is apply all this knowledge to karate, the object being to use it to the full. The present book aims to show you how to do just that. Of course, we are all different. It takes more time for some to learn than it does for others. The important thing is not to give up too easily. Even it takes you long to learn just a little, even if you improve only a little a day, you'll most certainly get there in the end. If the first couple of times you fail, don't tell yourself "I am just not cut out for this!" or "There is no way I can do that!" What you have to do instead is throw yourself into it. We all have lots to learn from our mistakes. I speak from personal experience as one who made more mistakes than average. If you make a mistake, *figure out why.*

If you *think* you can't do it, you can't. If you think you can, dig deep and you will always find a way forward. To realize your ambitions in life you first have to take a step forward.

I'd like to repeat one of my favorite adages: "If pushing doesn't work, pull. If pulling doesn't work, turn him. If turning him doesn't work, move around him. If even that doesn't work, move around him as you pull him and turn him.'

It is here that I found my answer. Herein lies the essence of control techniques, I always aim higher still. There can be no end to my quest. I shall continue to push back the physical and mental frontiers, always with my eye on the basics. If someone like me can come this far, I hope that young people will never be disheartened, but rather, using this book and using my own experience as stepping stones will aim ever higher. Never forget that you have many friends learning the same Ashihara karate all over the world.

Hideyuki Ashihara

芦原會館
ASHIHARA KARATE

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- Sensei Paul Mancarellar, 58 Derby Street, Pascoe Vale, Melbourne, Victoria 3044 Tel: (03)354-6156
- Sensei Craig Leeson, 16 Waterloo Street, Geelong West 3218, Victoria
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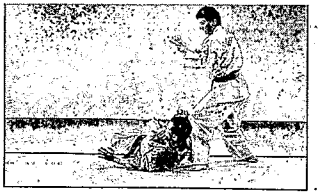

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- Sensei Hoosain Narker, P.O.Box 117, Retreat 7945 Tel: (021)722975

  Dojo: 248 Bridfge Street Springfield, MA
- Sensei Brian. E. Ebden, No 9 "ALBRINOR", Upper Bloem Street, Cape Town 8001 Tel: (021)24-9915

  Dojo: 2nd Floor, 74-76 Loop Street, Cape Town 8001 Tel: (021)23-2644
- Sensei P. Battista, 13A Devils Peak Road, 7764 Heideveld, Cape Town Tel: (021)65-9740

  Dojo: S.P.RA Centre, Ritters Road, Belthorne 7764 Tel: (021)61-0154

Spain:
- Sensei Jose Romero Cortina, Historiador Diago, 9-B, 46007, Valencia

Sri Lanka:
- Sensei D.C.M. Karunatilleke, 6 Second Lane, Dehiwela
- Sensei Thamara R. Nissanka, "SAMANARAYA", Maibula, Nittambuwa

Sweden:
- Sensei D.C. Cook, Tiundagatan 41 752 30, Uppsala, Sweden Tel: (460)018-105609

  Dojo: Uppsala Karate Klubb, Dalgaton 150, 75228 Uppsala Tel: (018)140555
  Lulea Karate Klubb, Fardagsvagen 17, 95017 Lulea Tel: (0920)41927
  Kalix Karate Klubb, PL1703 Innanbacken, 95200 Kalix Tel: (0923)11491

U.A.E.:
- Sensei M.J. Al Ansari, P.O.Box 303 ADMA-OPCO (Eng. Div.), Abu Dhabi
- Sensei Faress Abood Rady, c/o Miss B. McGinly Int. School of Choueitat P.O.Box 7212, Abu Dhabi

U.K.:
- Sensei Peter Rippin, London School of Karate Jutsu, 41 Samson Street Plaistow, London E13 9EJ
- Sensei John Richards, 21 Hallamsfields Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire

U.S.A.:
- Sensei Makoto Yoshida, Moro-Landis Studio, 10960 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, CA Tel: 818-341-6841

  Gardena Dance Studio: 1807 W. 166th St, Gardena

West Germany:
- Sensei Mustafa Cetin, 4670 Lunen, Graf-Haeseler-StraBe 53

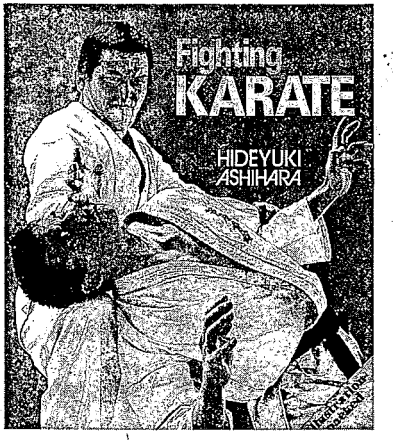
  Dojo: SV.PreuBen-Fachschaft-Karate Hauptverein, Alter Postweg 7,4670 Lunen

Those interested in joining an Ashihara Karate School, or in starting a branch dojo, please contact the Japan Headquarters.

About the Author
Hideyuki Ashihara

Hideyuki Ashihara was born in Hiroshima Prefecture in 1944. Since opening his first karate school in Yawatahama, a small seaside village in Ehime Prefecture, some 20 years ago, he has devoted himself to the pursuit of the most rational and logical karate techniques.
In 1980 he founded a new international karate organization — The Ashihara School, affiliated to which are some 120 dojos throughout the world.

His karate has been acclaimed as the most practical; he has taught at a Japanese police academy and brought on several Japanese karate champions.



"Fighting Karate" explains techniques for use in real fights. Attack and defense combinations, and fight control are further developed and refined using hundreds of step-by-step photographs.